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The Saturday Review of Literature

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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Your Money's Worth

DO books cost too much? Of course—nothing is cheap now except air, and even good air is getting expensive. But are books sold at prices that cannot be justified? Senators questioning a committee of publishers who sought a reduction in mailing rates expressed themselves emphatically in the affirmative a few weeks ago, although their remarks as quoted did not give an impression of much recent experience in actually buying (or reading) books. Yet—a novel of, say, 325 pages, costs to manufacture about $1.30 a copy for 5000 copies, additional copies at, say, $.44 a copy.* Why should it sell for a minimum of $2.00 or $2.50?

The publishers reply that cost of manufacture is only the beginning of the total cost of a book. They say that books have doubled in price while most other commodities have tripled. That is a strong argument, but leaves the desire and the need of cheaper books as strong as before. Books, a necessity for intellectual man, are a luxury for the human regarded as animal. Hence it is essential for civilization that they should be made easy to procure.

There are at least three categories of books that must be differentiated before we can see straight in this matter. Rare books have shot up to incredible prices, but this can scarcely be regarded as a social evil. A first edition of Keats in boards is not indispensable to happiness, and the distress of poor collectors is balanced by joy over increasing assets.

Old books, by which one means standard books not of current publication, can still be purchased at low prices, although more can be done, and more is being done, to provide cheap reprints of the whole range of standard literature. The same ingenuity that produced the low-price automobile might result in a considerable saving in a limited number of titles. A few well-known books are even now obtainable at ten cents the copy. Five dollars spent in a second-hand book shop and in series of reprints can still purchase the nucleus of a good library.

The complaint is of new books. In fiction, what once would have been called a dime novel, now costs $2.00. Outside of fiction, $5.00 is too often the price of a mediocre book. Five dollars or fifty dollars procures scarcely enough reading matter to keep an eager mind busy a month. What should be done?

The answer must come from the public, rather than the publishers. The publishers cannot limit their product in the modern fashion to a few "lines," and so sell cheap on a fractional profit. Their wares are many, have a short average life, and must be constantly replaced like the units of an army under fire. They make egregious errors, of course, but no more probably than other business men; and that publisher millionaires are rare suggests a reasonable rather than an unreasonable return upon their output. Unquestionably their methods of distribution are weak, but the problem is exceedingly difficult.

One remedy for their troubles and the high price of books which is often proposed is no remedy at all. Let them publish fewer books. Let each publisher reduce his list by two-thirds, and spend all his energy on the remainder. Get out few books, sell many of them, sell them cheap.

And what would be the result of this suggested plan? What books would remain unpublished? The standardized mediocre novel, the stereotyped guide-travel book, the fabricated volumes of misinformation on how-to-succeed, would they be eliminated? Certainly not. These books are sure of a certain sale. The books to be dropped would be precisely those that represent growth, experiment, and variety in literature. Poetry (at least good poetry) would be flung over wholesale; novels of an experimental character (such as "The Bridge of San Luis Rey"),

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*Figures given by a Boston publisher. Other estimates, $.35 to $.40 in quantity.

The Lady

By ELIZABETH J. COATSWORTH

The candle is out—
It has crashed to the floor,
She follows the wall
To find the door.

Her petticoats hiss
With a hiss of fear,
A path of sound
For a sensitive ear.

When she puts out her hand
Her breath gives a catch,
Fingers are there
Instead of a latch.

When she reaches back
Lest she should fall
A body is there
Instead of a wall.

What use to scream
So sole alone?
What use to struggle
Against the unknown?

Very well, she said
Imperiously,
Pray light the sconces
So we may see.

Here are my pearls
And here my rings,
And take off your hats,
You filthy things.

This Week

"Cambric Tea."
Reviewed by *Rachel Field*
"Maker of Modern Arabia."
Reviewed by *Frances Aziz Ali*
"The Island Within."
Reviewed by *Bernard De Voto*
"The Withered Root."
Reviewed by *Robert Marks*
Three Reviews of Books on the Drama.
By *George C. D. Odell, Donald M. Oenslager,* and *J. Ranken Towse.*
Mr. Moon's Notebook.
By *William Rose Benét*
The Collected Plays and Poems of Josephine Preston Peabody.
Reviewed by *John Hyde Preston*

Next Week, or Later

"The Closed Garden."
By *Julien Green.*
Reviewed by *Lee Wilson Dodd*

Red Theatre

By HALLIE FLANAGAN

THE revolution ripped the Russian stage wide open. It gave drama on its own terms. Tear down the curtain—no more lurking behind curtains in life or art. Out with the silly row of lights dividing us—we are no longer amusers and amused. Board up the orchestra—when we want music we'll have it, but not in a row between actors and audience, not in a pit covered for some inscrutable reason with evergreen. Knock down the flats, which for all your stippling are never anything but painted flats—when we want them we'll use them, but they'll be flats and not tree-trunks. For this, God save the mark, is a theatre—not a drawing room, a forest, or a bazaar.

The crowd pouring night after night into Meierhold's theatre is the most alive audience I have seen in any country. It is full blooded, vigorous, coarse, rough, careless in dress and manner, laughing, jostling, talking, shouting approval or disapproval. Workers, students, artists, soldiers surge into the great, bare theatre, take possession of the hard seats, fill the wooden boxes (which are literally boxes, not plush and gold bathtubs), and pack the galleries, from which they proceed to hang precariously, eating caviare sandwiches and exchanging pleasantries with the stage hands, who are rolling screens about with a careless efficiency far different from the usual last minute scramble before the curtain goes up. It is impossible to tell where audience leaves off and drama begins; it is difficult to decide whether to watch the boisterous crowd or the free, high stage, a stage stripped bare, with a back wall of bricks, with trestles and ladders and machinery in sight of the audience.

A bell rings, late comers crowd in, some finding seats, others going up the aisles and taking possession of the stage, a stage equipped with the material at hand, wood and steel in which Russia is rich. At her disposal no fabric save coarsest rep and wool. What matter? Her audience is dressed in coarsest rep and wool. What point display of luxurious material in a land where velvets, gauzes, silks have gone their way to the everlasting bonfire? The stage is not a fabric stage. No curtains of velvet hanging in folds; no curtains of silk in prismatic colors; no sky curtain of stretched canvas "thick inlaid with patines of bright gold"; no curtains of iridescent gauze behind which move figures richly clad. Not a soft stage, not a lovely stage; no interior decoration, no haberdashery, no "gowns by — gloves by — wraps by —. The shoes worn by Miss . . . in Act III by —." In Meierhold's theatre the shoes, if any, are worn by the actors—that is all we know and all we need to know.

But on so vast a stage, undecorated and undraped, men and women are but pigmy figures? Very well. Toss steel girders to the height of it. Fling steps across the length of it. Throw a bridge across the width of it. Give the actor swings, bars, see-saws to suit the mood of the play. Demand artists who are also athletes and acrobats, whose characterization must stand alone without the aid of beautiful costumes or elaborate properties, whose acting must partake of the honesty of wood and the steely rightness of metal.

To-night we are to see "The Death and Destruction of Europe," which takes place to the accompaniment of jazz played by an orchestra in one of the lower boxes. Insolent rhythms mercilessly underscore the theme, that the nations of the earth are

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dancing on a mine which is presently to explode capitalism and the bourgeoisie. America is on the list, and with a curious mingling of antagonism and amusement I watch a succession of scenes satirizing our national characteristics. In a Turkish bath several tired business men are being "done over" in order to prepare for putting across big deals on the morrow. These captains of finance, in spite of bald heads and heavy bodies, are unadult. Their smugness is the smugness of ignorance. Their aloofness from world affairs is the aloofness of provincial babies. Propensities to brag, to shoot up the town, to spoil their wives, to shake hands violently, are all caricatured as traits of overgrown, rather amusing, entirely immature children. The satire is neither brilliant nor bitter, but broad, and filled with Rabelaisian laughter.

* * *

During the intermission, after being thus nationally destroyed, I seek the refreshment room, my Russian companion, as we drink tea in tall glasses, holding forth about propaganda in art. "Art should not be propaganda," he says scornfully. "Who decides what art shall and shall not be? Only small people who cannot create it. The rule about propaganda in art is a silliness made up by those who have no ideas. Art may do anything it is strong enough to do. You see these people, walking, talking, smoking? Some are factory workers, some are Soviet officials, some are students. The girls with the red kerchiefs on their heads belong to the Komsomol, Russia's League of Youth. When they came into the theatre an hour ago all of them were separate individuals, thinking different things. Now they are only one person. They think only what Meierhold wishes them to think. That is because he is an artist and can make people feel what he feels. If a man has a belief burning him, and the belief comes out in a painting or a play, it will burn others, too."

The present conflagration continues with a scene in the French Cabinet, which pokes violent fun at political leaders, many of whom are greeted by shouts of derision from the audience. . . . A scene at a Polish party jibes at bourgeois society and the Church. A scene in a dive (Berlin, Copenhagen, Paris, New York?) is a masterpiece of grotesquerie revealing decadence. Fifteen such images, posters done in glaring colors, are staged entirely by wooden screens which roll about, with incredible rapidity to the jazz accompaniment, contriving, with the aid of uncannily clever lighting, to suggest a different atmosphere for each locale. After the fatal weakness of a nation is shown, a map of the world is flashed on the movie screen at the back of the stage, and that particular nation is crossed out, until finally nothing remains save the United Workers of the World, marching proudly along together.

While the destruction of Europe is being thus expeditiously effected, countless performances of like nature, though less skill, are being staged throughout Russia. For this new theatre, born of revolution, has within ten years leaped into astounding life. In 1914 there were in all Russia 210 theatres. In 1920 there were, according to the file in the Educational Bureau, 2197 subsidized theatres, 268 theatres in popular institutions, 3452 active theatrical organizations in villages—6000 in all. For 1927 I could get no actual statistics. Lunacharsky, Commissioner of Education, shrugged and smiled, "It is almost impossible to say, for new theatres spring up by the hundred every week. There are more in one Volga district than in all of France. In Kostrono alone are 600 village theatres; in Nishni Novgorod 9000. No school, factory, prison, village is without its theatre. And this leaves out of all account the street plays, the mysteries, the historic cycle plays, in which as many as 80,000 people, many of them spectators, take part."

* * *

In the storming of the Winter Palace at Petrograd, all barriers went down in blood and flame. The worker involuntarily became educator and artist. Untrained, he must train others, and instinctively he turns to the most primitive form of teaching—drama. In streets and squares, in factories and shops, on thousands of improvised stages, he re-enacts the mighty events which have resulted in his bewildered awakening. Through rude plays, often pantomimic, he explains — perhaps unconsciously attempts to justify—the Revolution, through emphasizing his wrongs in the past, his hopes for the future; expresses, too, his bold delight in the new order, in humor which has the slapdash of the circus. The Slavic passion for self-expression possesses him; streets, squares, and theatres seethe with the people's drama. The traditional playhouses, seventy of them left, fighting to maintain old material, old methods, cannot combat the red tide. Their plays by Chekov, Gorki, Tolstoi are of the old life and continue to draw an old audience. But the New Russian will have none of them. He will have revolt literature from all ages—Byron's "Cain," Schiller's "The Robbers," Rolland's "Danton," Toller's "Masse Mensch"—but for the most part he will create his own drama out of the life about him.

This passionate outpouring is at first entirely from the workers; but the new government soon recognizes that this tremendous activity can be harnessed for the good of the state. The Proletcult is enthroned in a palace, and all of its plans for fostering proletarian culture, for encouraging workingmen to express themselves through poetry, painting, and acting, are endorsed. Pageants of school children, mass demonstrations of workers, club performances in schools, café performances by strolling players, all meet with favor of the state. Wagon loads of actors from the Proletcult go from village to village enacting plays for thousands of peasants who are for the first time in history considered worth feeding propaganda. Special trains, brilliantly decorated with flaming posters, go through the provinces, to the Wrak, to the lower Volga, to Hindustan, carrying cinemas, printing presses, libraries, theatres,—all preaching the doctrine of the Third Internationale, and the emancipation of the worker. In a village near Moscow I watch a production entitled "Finding Their Place," a play which I am told was conceived by the peasants, though it suggests to me a crude version of Maiahovsky's "Mysteria Bouffes."

We sit in the village hall, crowded to suffocation with stolid, attentive peasants. The windows, needless to say, are hermetically sealed, and the flickering oil lamps increase the aroma, which becomes a tangible thing and dwells among us. The stage, at the end of the room, is separated from us by screens covered by wall newspapers, so popular in Russia. These papers, written by hand in the schools, are the entr'acte diversion, some of the wits of the village reading portions aloud to the amusement of the rest.

* * *

When the screens are removed, ragged workers with broken tools come in, fighting with fat, well dressed gentlemen whom I take to be capitalists. (In Russia anyone who possesses excess avoirdupois or excess clothing is presumed to be a capitalist.) The fat gentlemen knock the workers into a portion of the stage which certain properties reveal as hell; but after a prolonged struggle they clamber out, and chase the rotund ones off the stage. The next scene is in heaven, where the workers are greeted affably by angels who take away their broken tools and give them food and drink. At first the workers recline at ease, but presently they become bored with this divine state of leisure, and in spite of the distress of the angels they go forth in search of "their place." The next scene is a schoolroom where, in small seats meant for children, the workers are laboriously learning to read and write. At the sight of the great hulking bodies bent laboriously over copybooks, the audience stirs, a slow sigh passes through the room. . . For the first time I sense in a dim way the fact that in Russia to-day millions of men and women are being taught to read and write. . . The next scene shows the peasants in conference with State officials, saying that they have now become good citizens, and that they demand the tools of citizenship; tools which are given them quite literally in the final scene, in which most of the stage space is occupied by gleaming farm machines. The workers enter, leap triumphantly upon the machines, and shout the song, in which the audience joins:

. . . and the international army shall be the human race.

At Trade Union or Factory theatres, the Blue Blouses, workers by day and actors by night, perform original acrobatic plays. I remember seeing three men and three girls glorify workers of the Army, the Navy, the farms, and the factories. As sailors, they climbed an imaginary rigging; as soldiers they marched and wheeled and turned in a stirring exhibition of military manœuvres; as peasants they planted, reaped, and stored the grain, with a slow, swinging rhythm suggestive of a vast expanse of steppes; as factory workers they controlled machines with dynamic energy. Each motif reached its climax in a refrain taken up by the audience, a refrain consisting of the repetition of a single word, the big word—COMRADE—half sung, half shouted:

"Tovarisch! Tovarisch! Tovarisch!"

The effect of this exuberance was an amazing impression of having seen, not three men and three girls in an amateur song and dance, but a forest of ships with sailors in the rigging, a battalion of soldiers, a commonwealth of farm and factory hands all linked in a comradeship of work.

All of these stages, professional, semi-professional, and amateur, in cities, villages, farms, schools, factories throughout Russia, are the tributary forces of the theatre which finds its highest expression in the Zon. Under Meierhold, the great unwieldy mass of worker-material, worker-acting, worker-designing is fused into art. In Meierhold, the new theatres of Russia find not only a leader, but an epitome of the belief which they desire to express.

* * *

A man of the theatre for the past twenty-five years, Meierhold has perfect command of the technique which is the foundation of art. A revolutionist who fought in the Red Army, he has proved himself ready to die for the principles he is now expressing on the stage. A student of drama in many parts of the world, his theatre can express the international aspect which is the dream of the Soviet. Believing with religious fervor in the theatre as a place where author, actor, and spectator are magically fused, he has the power of imbuing others with this belief. This tall man with a shock of gray brown hair tossed carelessly back from a face at once magnetic and sinister, meets with electrical response from his actors. He is as dynamic as one of his own machines, as free and released as his own stage. The genius of Meierhold, however, is drawn not only from an inner luminosity, but from an extraordinary theatrical experience. He exemplifies that hard saying in art that originality comes through the absorption of the ideas of others. During four years of acting under Stanislavsky he learned how to conceive a part internally and project it with infinite detail and exactitude; how to make each actor even in a mob personalize his rôle and create it from the inside out; how to use realism as it has seldom been used on any stage. Later, having left the Moscow Art Theatre because he could not find there the close relationship he desired between actor and audience, he tried many experiments in Petrograd, Tiflis, and Minsk; conditionalism, stylization, mysticism, any one of which he can now use when he so desires. In Italy he became engrossed in the Commedia dell'-Arte, and his knowledge of the form is felt in the inimitable clowning of his actors and in the tragedy which often underlies the comic mask. During his visit to Greece he was influenced by a study of the function of the chorus, and the ancient use of the mask; both of these elements he now reflects at will. Meierhold has met with practically every form of theatrical art for the past quarter of a century, and like Ulysses, he has become a part of all that he has met.

* * *

The task of his actors, drawn from many provinces and many fields of labor, is to build a theatre which shall train a vast audience, unaccustomed to theatre going, in the principles of communism. The struggle that Russia is making for a universal culture is bigger than anything art can say about it. Art must serve this thing bigger than itself. Forty to sixty percent of all theatre seats are sold at low rates to the trade unions and passed on for a nominal price to the workers. Hard that the intelligentsia, the former bourgeoisie must pay more than the worker? Yes, but the greatest need must be met first. In the ideal state, theatre seats will be free for all, but in working toward that goal, the state will subsidize all theatres, and accommodate first those who have in the past been denied theatre going.

This theatre, which is to train a social order, is not interested in individual problems. What does the man making a new world care for the little personal love or hate or struggle of some insignificant person? He is concerned with the social struggle. If the old stage forms, painted scenery, built sets, drapes, remain, the spectator will interpret the play as he used to in the pre-revolutionary theatre. He will see, by habit, an individual conflict, where the revolutionary stage wishes him to see a social conflict. So with the passing of the little struggles of insignificant people, pass the little insignificant rooms

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in which these struggles took place. Constructivism comes about in Russia not primarily because of any idea of the effectiveness of illustrating the climaxes and rhythms of a play by the use of swings, see-saws, ladders, but because drama has burst its bounds.

The new drama is not written, painted in words, or decorated, but constructed, almost, it might be said, by dramatist, actor, and audience. The stage, then, will not be painted or decorated either, but will be constructed by elements of reality from every day life. It will use realism when a local situation is in point, as in "Roar, China!", but in general the stage will be left unlocalized, for actors who wear their own working clothes.

The actor must not become an imagined character, because that would be to set up again the false standard of a stage which pretends to be something it is not. He must not become an abstract idea, as in expressionism, because this is not the age of abstractions, but of realities and machines. His acting is not classic, romantic, or realistic. He throws aside all these traditions. There is freedom in his flesh. He is an actor using the play as a ball to be tossed now to another actor, now to the audience; he is a super-machine, his movements attaining a rhythmic beat of power and precision; he is a worker, a part of the social order he illustrates on the stage.

* * *

The most revealing expression of Russia's theatre, however, cannot be compressed within four walls. . . The stage for the anniversary celebration of the revolution is Red Square, which nine years ago witnessed the bombardment of the Kremlin in that terrible October. To-day the old Chinese Wall is flaming with scarlet banners of the hammer and the scythe. The minarets of St. Basil look down upon a vast crowd gathered from all Russia, and upon the Soviet forces drawn up, infantry and horse, rank on rank. Evergreen is upon the tomb of Lenin whose spirit walks abroad.

In this drama of remembrance the Gate of Salvation is to play a part; that proud gate before which in other days each passerby was forced to remove his hat before the frescoes representing the Redeemer. As the hour of nine strikes, the bells in the tower of the Gate of Salvation chime out in the Russian Revolutionary Funeral March. There is profound silence, tribute to the dead, a silence broken only when the band strikes up the Internationale. Then the crowd surges forward, breaks into excited comment, and the parade starts.

First the infantry, company after company—marching, marching—regiments from the Ukraine, regiments from the Volga, regiments from the Caucasus, regiments from Siberia, from Bessarabia, from Georgia and Armenia; inscrutable yellow faces of the regiments from Manchuria; Persian regiments with sabres from Irania and Turkestan. . . . Marching, marching, with fixed bayonets, while the gun-holes in the old wall flash red and drip red of banner and of flag.

On comes the cavalry, the most superb horses in the world, gorgeous horses, proud horses. On come the horsed regiments from all Russia; Turks from the five million Tartars, on grey horses with sabres flashing, as they charge down the hill to the river; giant Kalmucks from the Lower Volga, on giant horses; Finns and Moravians from the Middle Volga; mountaineers under the blue and white pennons of the Caucasus dashing at breakneck speed down the cobbled streets, with now and then a horse madly plunging past the regiment. Thunder of hoofs. . . . Thunder on the Left?

Now come processions of school children, young Pioneers under the red flag; wagon loads of Octobryata, "Little Lenins," too small to walk but waving flags and garlands from eager hands. Tanks and cannons come rumbling by, farm machines drawn by work horses; and finally, the workers, chief part of this strange procession, which seems not so much a celebration of the past as a symbol of the present, a prophecy of the future. Workers from the farms, from the factories, from the trade unions; workers under banners, and workers under posters; workers drawn from the audience, which now dissolves, as spectators become actors and march along with their comrades; and when the formal procession ends, from intersecting squares still come the workers. Throughout the day, all Russia walks proudly in the streets of her capital under her red flag. Throughout the day the ancient palaces re-echo to the refrain which, once heard, is never forgotten:

"Arise, Arise, Arise, Ye Slaves."

Is it, after all, new, this Theatre of the Revolution? Or is it, in spite of obvious differences in material and manner, a return to an old, old theatre? To the uncurtained stage on the hillside, to a drama forged from a belief which audience and actor shared? In the idea of Communism, the theatre in Russia has what the Greek stage had in the gods, what the medieval drama had in the church—a force outside itself to which it pays tribute with religious ecstasy. The theatre of the Revolution pours plays as libations before the altar of its belief. It is a great theatre because it is a dedicated theatre.

The House of Childhood

CAMBRIC TEA. By REBECCA LOWRIE. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1928. $2.

Reviewed by RACHEL FIELD

THIS reminiscence of a mid-western childhood some twenty odd years ago, is unusual in that it is written in the third person and without the haze of sentimentality which so often clouds books of this type. Artistically this is an advantage. It is a relief not to be expected to shed tears over childish woes or to glow with what the rhetoric books used to call "the pleasure of recognition" over early triumphs. But on the other hand, the reader misses a certain warmth, which is conspicuously lacking in this sharply-etched series of memories.

REBECCA LOWRIE

Those who are looking for another "Golden Age" or for some comfortable recital of childhood's happy hours, will not find it here. There is far more tragedy and bitterness and disillusion than in many volumes twice its size. And the very intensity of the child's bewilderment and baffled suffering has only made Mrs. Lowrie more determined not to allow feeling of any sort to creep in. Almost monotonously she handles her character, with a restraint that at times cramps her in what she is trying to express. It is as if she were afraid we might accuse her of liking this clever, unchildish child she has recreated. Perhaps the condensed quality of her style and the structure of the story itself are in a large part responsible for this. Mrs. Lowrie has not fallen into the usual habit of branching out into long descriptions; she does not go into too great length over unimportant incident. She has pared down to essentials, and the result is clear, really distinguished writing, uncluttered with details. No literary slovenliness here; all is ordered and polished to fit an admirable pattern, and yet, it often leaves one cold.

To be sure the child into whose mind and small world we are projected was a cold child. She must have been very trying to have around the house, and personally we much prefer knowing her between book covers than in the flesh. We are glad we didn't live next door to her to be studied by her inquisitive eyes and found wanting. For she found nearly everything wanting in the life and people about her. With the exception of her nurse, her little brother who died, and her pet toad, we cannot remember many outgoing emotions towards those with whom she came in contact. She weighed and measured, and most were discarded. This makes interesting, if slightly chilling reading. Probably the little girl was unconsciously rebelling against the Pollyanna edicts of her day. Certainly she was analytical beyond her years, with a genius for discovering the shams and makeshifts of her elders. Sensitive, in a household of more obvious, self-satisfied adults, this child's rebellions and inhibitions, both maternal and religious, are certainly thought-provoking. One begins to feel uneasy, wondering just how many complex, superior little personalities like this are reacting to the life about them in just such prosperous, apparently sympathetic homes as this one was supposed to be.

We particularly liked Mrs. Lowrie's handling of the child's first contact with death. Here the lack of sentiment was a distinct advantage. It is simple and keen, this sudden realization that people do not go away; that they lie in the parlor dressed in white with something strange and inexplicable about them. There is no hedging or bluffing here, the child goes straight to the core of the tragedy, as children do. This is one of the best chapters in the book, far more real and moving than when she becomes involved in trying to give us an insight into the little girl's religious beliefs and scruples. Like all oversensitive children, she took scripture texts literally, and with dire results to the Faith of her Fathers, and yet through all her agnostic experimentation she remained a singularly austere small Puritan.

One charming chapter about the rearing of an altar to a heathen God is slightly reminiscent of the Kenneth Graham manner, and another that tells of the loss of a pet toad and the pangs of young conscience over this is also excellently managed. In the delightful little foreword to the book, Mrs. Lowrie is at her best:

"The house of childhood," she writes, by way of setting her mood and scene, "is not a house of many mansions. It is a house of little rooms, whose doors are ready to swing open at the gentlest touch, sometimes even to swing open of themselves.

"There is nothing mysterious about this, as about other abandoned houses. Little familiar things are always stirring about among the shadows, playing games in the corners, thinking the thoughts you used to think. And once you have gone inside you feel quite cozy and snug, as though you had never been away.

"So you set to work dusting off the chairs and tables and putting the tea set to rights in the cupboard, and making the sea shells march in a straight row across the mantelpiece. . . ."

Mrs. Lowrie almost lives up to this delectable promise, but not quite. To use a rather far-fetched metaphor, it is as if she had allowed her adult, critical attitude to hold the reins of her past too tight. Restraint, if overworked, may produce a sense of flatness, and with all its excellence one feels this more than once in reading "Cambric Tea." Indeed, in so beautifully planned and skillfully executed a book as this, one cannot help wishing that the child's emotions had broken through the author's pattern oftener.

Nothing could be more in keeping with the text than the charming format that the publishers have given it. Such altogether satisfactory printed calico covers and bright green labels deserve special mention.

The English attitude toward book-buying was recently vigorously attacked by one calling himself "Peter Ibbetson," in the *London Nation and Athenæum*. He said in part:

"There are, of course, many homes in which books play no part. A large proportion of the population is content to read only a daily paper and an occasional magazine. That is an intelligible attitude. It is not my present purpose to criticise those educated illiterates who have no use for books. But there is another great section of the middle class which does read and value books. My quarrel is with them. They are not paying their way. They are sponging on writers and publishers, and making it impossible to supply at a reasonable price and a fair profit the commodity they consume. They read books, but they do not buy them. In a large number of fairly prosperous homes, where expenditure upon dress, locomotion, and entertainment is permitted on a generous scale, the buying of a book is frowned upon as a piece of wanton extravagance. 'Are there no circulating libraries?' it is asked. 'Can you not borrow the book from a friend or consult it in a school, college, or public library?' There is a note of severe moral disapproval in the family criticism of expenditure on books, which makes the delinquent feel that he is grossly self-indulgent . . . the fellow has made a fool, if not a beast, of himself."

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The Strong Man of Arabia

MAKER OF MODERN ARABIA. The Story of Ibn Sa'oud. By AMEEN RIHANI. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company. 1928. $6.

Reviewed by FRANCES AZIZ ALI

EVERYONE who is interested in "the Arabian affair," as they call it in the Near East, will envy Ameen Rihani's experience in meeting Ibn Sa'oud face to face. The inaccessible position of his capital in the remote and inhospitable desert, and the Spartan conditions which must be endured by all of his visitors, protect him from casual acquaintanceships, but his meteoric career and his present unquestioned ascendancy in the arid peninsula make him one of the best known if least seen men in Oriental politics.

Abd'ul-Aziz Ibn Abd'ur-Rahman Aal Faisal Aal Sa'oud is the strong man of Arabia. He commands the respect always accorded to a self-made man who has arrived. Everyone wishes to be his friend; everyone with a cause hopes to enlist his aid; his weight is sufficient to give a favorable balance in any direction.

He is a man now in his prime who started life as the son of an exiled king, their mid-desert domain having been conquered by Ibn 'ur-Rashid, a powerful rival. At the age of twenty-four, with borrowed money in his pocket, Ibn Sa'oud set out at the head of a band of twenty Arabs mounted on mangy camels, fortified by his belief that God would aid him to recover the kingdom of his ancestors. To-day the Rashid princes are prisoners at his court. He is Imam of the Wahhabis, the puritan brothers of Islam, King of the Hedjaz, and King of Nadj with its Dependencies.

Many attribute his strength to his religious influence over the fanatical desert Bedouins. It appears from Rihani's book that their dependence upon him is even more complete. Thousands of Bedouins living in the shadow of El-Riyadh's walls are nourished from the king's kitchens, clothed in his garments, mounted upon his beasts. There are practically no necessities on sale in the bazaars; they are all provided by "our father," the Sultan. "Thou hast seen with thy own eyes," said the Master of Court Ceremonies to the author. "Now write down in thy book, for what I tell thee is truth—write, Allah keep thee! Every king in the world is supported by his people; but the people of Nadj are supported by their king."

* * *

Let it not be supposed that he is independent. He has been receiving regularly a handsome stipend from the British Government which will cease as soon as he forgets to be grateful. And he is not likely to forget; he has thousands of hungry mouths to remind him. But unlike other Arab leaders who have received similar stipends, he has apparently succeeded in maintaining the impression that he is doing a favor in accepting it. He considers that it is not large in proportion to the service that he renders. He is the only man who has used the English, instead of being used by them. Rihani gives this significant passage:

> His Highness was in a brown study. And then, as if waking from a trance, he uttered a sharp, "Hearken: I will inform thee. When the Inglaiz want something, they get it. When we want something, we have to fight for it. I will put my seal,"—he punched the palm of his left hand with the knuckles of the right,—"if Great Britain says, You must. But I will strike when I can."
>
> The coffee-bearer poured for the Sultan, who took two sips, shook the empty cup—meaning sufficient—as he returned it, and resumed.
>
> "I will strike when I can. Not in betrayal, Allah be my witness, but in self-defence. What I cede of my rights under force, I will get back when I have sufficient force, *inshallah*. No words can be more plain and clear."

The two burning questions are: Is Ibn Sa'oud as incorruptible as he appears to be? Is he sufficiently intelligent to employ the scientific aids necessary to create a modern Arab state?

As to the first question, experience shows that regular stipends, with the comforts that they afford, are as poison to the hardy Bedouin. While Ibn Sa'oud consents to use a high-powered automobile, and certain other modern conveniences, he has up to now resisted the insidious influence of luxury. In this he has shown himself infinitely superior to the "brood of Hussein," Ali, Abdullah, Feisal, and Zeid, those amiable pawns who allowed themselves to be played with by Lawrence and the other Pan-Arabists. The Shereefian brothers have succumbed completely. Feisal has fallen far since he was chosen as a prophet by Colonel Lawrence; personally unpopular in his kingdom of Iraq, he lives simply for his trips to Europe, where he tries alternate régimes of health cures and cabarets, his only anxiety being to avoid loss of the royal salary which is contingent upon his good behavior. His brothers are equally practical. Ibn Sa'oud will probably resist all such temptation. The money he accepts is not for his personal use; it goes directly to the maintenance of his followers.

But he will never be able to refuse it on any grounds, however proud, until he can provide sufficient revenue otherwise. This will involve the use of science and organization in a modern sense. Will this son of the desert be equal to his new problem? Will he, moreover, know how to make place in his patriarchal despotism for the democratically-minded Arab intelligentsia who look to him for leadership?

Rihani has evidently taken Doughty as his pattern; and very wisely, too. He has written an excellent book, humorous, colorful, and balanced in judgment. He has a certain virtuosity which leads him into flourishes and arpeggios, especially at the beginning, so that his style sometimes approaches "mandarin English." But he deserves great credit for his disinterested and tolerant spirit, since as a Syrian Christian whose native language is Arabic he probably had to overcome more Moslem prejudice than a Westerner would have encountered on such a voyage.

Horatio Alger

ALGER. A BIOGRAPHY WITHOUT A HERO. By HERBERT R. MAYES. New York: Macy-Masius. 1928. $3.50.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

THE desire of publishers and writers to exploit the avid present-day taste for biography is rapidly going to unfortunate limits. Too many biographies of obscure or freakish figures, too hasty and inadequate biographies of famous men, may yet spoil a commendable public interest. This book represents several unhappy aspects of the rush to publish new lives of anybody and everybody. Horatio Alger, while worth a good magazine essay, or a good chapter in a history of popular literature, is not worth a $3.50 book with plates, elaborate endpapers, and tinted top. Nor is this in any sense a good biography. It is pretentious in style; it is oversmart—typical chapter headings are "Let Us Pray" for Alger's boyhood in a parsonage, and "Greeley Speaks His Piece" for his contacts with the West; and it is irritatingly difficult to extricate its facts from its embroideries. To justify his book the author feels it necessary to assure us that "Alger is a name better known than Dickens or Tolstoi or Balzac or Hawthorne. His name in America is better known than Shakespeare's, his writings more widely read." To lend dignity to his subject, the author resorts to such flights as the following:

> He trudged along a mountain path and perched himself up high, where, in a half light, and as the trees made love, he could see dimly the plain unroll below.
>
> "Am I, dear God, a failure?"
>
> That was his question, a thousand times repeated. He tells himself that he is not a failure who can find thoughts and words for a story that men will read today and their children tomorrow, and children to come in tomorrows to come, down through time forever. But words for him are scarce and thoughts are scarcer. The man's despairing cry darts down to the plain, sweeps across to a neighboring mountain wall, and rises again in even more despairing echo:
>
> "I want to write."

What can be said for this volume is that it has collected,, together with much which might better have been omitted, some facts which the future writer of a magazine essay or a chapter in a history of juvenile fiction will put to good use. Alger was the son of a Unitarian minister of Chelsea, Mass.; he went to Harvard—for a time; he had a taste of Parisian life; he became a minister himself; and then, invited by William T. Adams to write for a magazine called *Student & Schoolmate*, he began "Ragged Dick," resigned his pulpit, and moved to New York. He never married. In all, he wrote some 120 books, besides innumerable magazine articles and poems. In New York City his headquarters were always the Newsboys' Lodging House founded by Charles Loring Brace, and in various ways aside from the use of his pen Alger did a good deal for homeless youngsters. Never, it seems, did he become affluent, and he died a lonely and beaten figure in 1899 in Natick, Mass. Mr. Mayes tells us nothing that offers an accurate clue to the total sales of his books; he speaks of Alger's influence only in the general terms already quoted, and makes no attempt to appraise his place in the gallery occupied by Jacob Abbott, Oliver Optic, G. A. Henty, and others. Nor does he attempt to explain just why Alger, so appallingly moral, so appallingly crude, captured the boyhood of America with a rush two generations ago, and would nowadays be rejected by it with scorn. Yet it is as a symbol and index of popular taste that Alger is most interesting.

Jewry in America

THE ISLAND WITHIN. By LUDWIG LEWISOHN. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1928. $2.50.

Reviewed by BERNARD DE VOTO

MR. LEWISOHN brings to his declared purpose, the recapturing in fiction of the epic note, a formidable and practiced equipment. In sheer competence, as a technician working with the legitimate materials of fiction, he belongs of right to the most distinguished circle of contemporary novelists in America. "Don Juan" and "The Case of Mr. Crump" established that much, and "The Island Within" is technically a finer performance than either. Once that much has been said, however, reservations must be made. This new novel lacks, in some measure, the power of its predecessors. The determination to recapture the epic note has resulted in some sacrifice of intensity. The material is spread so wide that it loses in depth, or rather in emphasis. Dealing with the spiritual inheritance of Arthur Levy as a Jew, it somewhat weakens the force of Arthur Levy by spending too much effort on the inheritance. One feels that much, if not all, of the story of Levy's forebears could have been more effectively handled in the consciousness of Levy himself, perhaps by the methods that Mr. Lewisohn is at some pains to denounce. So to treat the first fourth of the book would have sacrificed much fine fiction which of itself makes good reading, but it might well have made more poignant the experience of Levy, which is after all the central artistic problem of the novel. I, for one, feel also that Mr. Lewisohn's discursive essays, inserted after the manner of Fielding, at the beginning of major divisions, weaken the effect. I do not quarrel with them as essays; they are brilliantly done and there is a place in literature for them; but I cannot feel that they are anything but an annoyance in fiction.

It is almost certainly true that no Gentile can completely understand the island within the Jew, or fully appreciate Mr. Lewisohn's tragic portrayal of it. Such a reflection makes all the more vigorous one's admiration of this book, for it communicates across this isolation a lively sense of immortal sorrow and immortal pride. The experiences of Arthur Levy as a boy, as an adolescent, and as a mature man, always trying to make complete contact with the Gentile world, hurt and saddened even more by the world's failure to live up to his ideals of brotherhood than by the persistent antagonism of race, coming at last to believe that the bars are insuperable and that there is not only comfort, but glory in their being so, and dedicating himself to the ancient bondage—these experiences are truly epic and truly memorable. The main thematic material of this story is handled with a skill little short of masterly, but no more skillfully than the great variety of supporting character and incident, the counterpoint, which Mr. Lewisohn manipulates with consistent variety and vivacity. To present most of the infinite spectacle of Jewry in America, well supported by the long view of other countries and ages, was Mr. Lewisohn's intent, and, just about as nearly as a novelist can encompass infinity, he has succeeded in it.

If "The Island Within" does not recapture the epic note, we shall not soon have that note sounded in our fiction. And yet the very effort to write an epic has somewhat weakened the book as a novel. Arthur Levy, in the end, though poignantly and memorably rendered, is poignant and memorable less as an individual than as a symbol. And with that, I suppose, we must be content. It suggests that the ends of epic and fiction are too different to be satisfactorily fused.

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The Vista of the Stream

OBERLAND. By DOROTHY M. RICHARDSON. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1928.

Reviewed by EARL A. ALDRICH

THIS novel, the dust-cover tells us, is the tenth in a series originally called "Pilgrimage." Count of the titles listed in "Oberland" itself reveals only nine, but that is a mere trifle. What is one among so many! Indeed, the remark, though a trifle unjust, is well-nigh irresistible, that members of the series are so alike and so uneventful as to make the omission of one title, more or less, of no importance. For these are frankly "stream of consciousness" novels, with all the excellences and defects of the type, and what meagre plot each possesses is to be guessed only by faint auroral flushes sent along the wavering vista of the stream.

"Oberland" describes a two weeks' vacation spent mostly on the stairs talking to two men, or on a toboggan. Regarded as a story, or as a stage in the "Pilgrimage," it is nothing; regarded as a sense impression of a small, hot Swiss hotel and a visual impression of snow it is intensely vivid.

To an academic reviewer these novels present a temptation. It would be easy and not entirely unjust to give to a criticism of them artistic unity around the figure of Samuel Johnson. One can hear him say, as of "Clarissa Harlowe," "Why, Sir, if you were to read (Miss) Richardson for the story, your impatience would be so much fretted that you would hang yourself. But you must only read him for the sentiment, and consider the story only as giving occasion for the sentiment." Or again, of "Ossian": when Johnson was asked whether he thought any man of modern age could have written such poems, he replied, "Yes, Sir, many men, many women, and many children." Finally, "Sir, a man might write such stuff forever, if he would *abandon* his mind to it." With a little elaboration these quotations could be made to apply very well indeed. But they are very old-fashioned and academic judgments; not everyone will find them just, and a sympathetic though critical reader will hasten to add that they leave something unsaid. Yet one cannot begin at once with praise.

* * *

"For "Pilgrimage," unlike, for example, "The Forsyte Saga," cannot be called a novel. Except for length it has none of the characteristics of the type. As has been said, it is essentially without a plot. It must have had a beginning, in No. 1, but it has no middle, and there is only an inference, to be drawn from two widely separated sentences in "Oberland," that it will have an end. Again, it has no characters. Figures come and go in the mist; names appear, disappear, recur casually, and vanish. Even Miriam herself, the stream of whose impressions is the almost uninterrupted matter of the books, has no personality, no individuality. She thinks, it is true, that, in spite of all her insistence on the absolute and immense superiority of the feminine intellect over the masculine, she has a masculine mind. Yet it is hard, if her own description of the masculine mind is accepted, to see why. She also thinks that the sum of her carefully noted and preciously preserved impressions makes her life and mind incomparably "rich,"—a curious inversion of values. Richness, assuredly, consists in actions observed and performed, in spiritual battles decisively won, in the give and take of conversation with friends, in the understanding and intellectual assimilation of great pictures, great music, great plays, and great books. Yet of such things "Pilgrimage" has scarcely a trace. She clearly thinks herself "advanced." Yet in spite of these volumes filled with nothing but her thoughts Miriam herself remains absolutely without individuality; *flux et praeterea nihil*. It is extraordinary how little sense of acquaintanceship she transmits after leading us through her reveries from Alps to soap and from affinities to fleas.

Finally, "Pilgrimage" has no real setting, atmospheric or otherwise. London streets, a club, Miriam's rooms (often known only as "Wimpole Street") are only occasional squares of pavement, a red sofa, or dirty stairs. Miriam's room at Oberland is gloriously hot, and her toboggan slides are "authentic." But such matters are too vague or too confused to count. And "Oberland," vivid though it be, is after all only a very limited travel book—the thing that a female author might send in sections to a friend, and later publish because her public wanted some personal impressions.

But the last, of course, is what Miss Richardson partly intends. One does not read books, she causes Miriam to say in "Honeycomb," to learn about people; one reads in order to know "everything, absolutely about the author." And so she describes objects precisely as they strike her (or Miriam), everything and anything. Hence she entirely upsets the traditional scale of literary values. She only implies the actions and events of which most novels are constituted; she transmits solely those musings which exist in the latter only to explain events. Innumerable matters cry aloud for explanation. And when they are explained, what then? The history of Soames Forsyte and his two wives opens new vistas and illuminates many realities; but the story of Miriam and her vaguely possible lovers (usually married to other women) is confusing, even baffling.

Hence to read "Pilgrimage" requires an intellectual *bouleversement*. Unless the reader perceives that at once, the experience is exhausting. But, if Miriam is met on her own ground, if Miss Richardson's work is read as she intends, she has at least something to say. It should be taken only a little at a time, for even surrender to her method involves a really painful demand upon the imagination and the attention. But thus read she does render extraordinarily vivid the passing sensations of each moment. As May Sinclair says, she "gets you." For a time, and until normality returns, you will see in subway trains, along the streets, and on familiar walls, colors, shadows, lights that you never perceived before.

Only, as you try to recover the unconscious and to fix the passing image or feeling, intelligence may insinuate, "Is it worth while? Are you not after all letting your mind drift, instead of directing it to something definite? Are you not salvaging the trivial to the neglect of the vital?" And it is hard to resist agreement. Moreover, it is going to be hard to make most people, in whom good sense is or should be the directing element of their nature, feel otherwise. The stream of consciousness is none other than the flow of day-dreams, or the gleam from the surface of life. Most of us distrust day-dreaming, even our own, and most of us suspect the superficial. When we are bidden, therefore, to follow with intense concentration the day-dreams and the superficialities of another's mind, we are apt to recoil. Most readers, it is pretty certain, will recoil from "Pilgrimage," and the instinct which draws them back will be a sound one. And at the risk of being thought inflexible, and with the assurance of being called Victorian, it is only honest to assert that interest in Miriam and her unappreciated married affinities languishes and dies when she is confronted with the realities of Becky Sharp, Mme. Vesey-Neroni, or Eustacia Vye.

A Welsh Tannhäuser

THE WITHERED ROOT. By RHYS DAVIES. New York: Henry Holt and Co. 1928. $2.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT MARKS

THE production of a great work, as Mr. Arnold has so neatly said, depends in the main on two things—the man and the moment; in other words, if a man has the facility to record vital things about evangelism in a time when all the world is intent upon Aimee MacPhersons in life and Elmer Gantrys in art, he has all the necessary material set for a Parnassian work.

Now Mr. Davies has set out to talk about Venus and Tannhäuser in terms of D. H. Lawrence. He has attempted the very unusual task of weighing in a sympathetic and sincere fashion the life and emotions of an evangelist . . . and his reactions to the holy-rolling orgasms of his flock. His characters, drawn out of and around the Welsh coal pits, dreamed of a Heaven that was to be an everlasting revival, "all singing and recitals and organ-playing," yet, being of the earth and grimy, they sank back from an erotic joy in the passion of their Lord into torpor of the pub and the sordidness of the pit.

Reuben Daniels, born out of drunkenness into the colliery, rolls about, one day, in the left-wing Corinthian temple. There he finds speaking through him the voice of the Lord, who speaking that day with a peculiar Welsh eloquence and semi-poetic style, made his mouthpiece, *ipso facto*, a preacher. And so Reuben, now consecrated in the service of the Master, feels his soul burning with the need of bringing peace and light into the lives of blighted workers. So far Mr. Davies's thesis has been in strict accord with the *Zeitgeist*.

But at this point he leaves the formal setting and injects the personally intellectual spirit . . . he omits the accent from the provincial vista, which, after all, might have done just as well for George Eliot, or for Hardy. He forgets all this background for a while, and concentrates on a distinct interpretation of certain universal Freudian things. The tortured dreams and perpetual anguish of Daniel the Suppressed, the hunger of over-sexed women for closer contact with his ascetic beauty, the insatiable yearning of the women converts for a peculiarly sensual union with the Divine, all savor of the worthy Viennese doctor.

And here Mr. Davies has done his work with artistry and colorful realism. With his simple and richly sensuous style he has chronicled with just a bit too much poignant detail—and perhaps just a few too many eloquent perorations—the disintegration of a sensitive nature in the sea of religious ecstasy . . . a creature who, floating in this psychic vast, suddenly finds that he is buoyed not by a pure, spiritual medium, but by pulsing human blood—all too bloody.

The moment is right and the man is substantial; but even so the matter of proportion and selection leaves not a little for debate.

Life's Round-Trip Ticket

THERE AND BACK AGAIN. By MARY CROSBIE. New York: J. H. Sears and Co. 1927. $2.

Reviewed by GLADYS GRAHAM

MEN dead and women pregnant—perpetual seed-time and harvest—the brief succession of the seasons and then the cyclic return. Men and women, young, a little free; old and bound again. The eternal recurrence has never been more insistently present in a novel than in "There and Back Again," yet Miss Crosbie has had recourse to no long family history, generation after generation. Only a few years elapse, and the life depicted is not monotonous. Partly the effect is accomplished by saturating the book with the things of earth and nature, by stretching long days out in the sun and by hanging black nights across the sky, and partly it is accomplished through the attitude of the characters. The only tickets given out for life, Miss Crosbie seems to say, are non-exchangeable round-trip ones, there and back again.

Long before such flights had become usual enough to be easy, Catherine Aysgarth at twenty-three left a faithful husband, a pleasant home, and children to seek for herself a necessary freedom and continence. Establishing herself in a château in France, she led a comfortable life surrounded by friends who were for the most part free thinking, free living artists. When she is forty, circumstances bring her back to her home, her children, and her husband, and it is then that "There and Back Again" takes up her story. Her freedom, which she had thought real and a force for good, comes to seem only a shifted fetter, and the fear that a daughter's blindness and a son's wrecked career may have had their beginnings in this freedom creeps chilly over her. She is too intelligent a woman to blame herself for the freaks of fate, but she is wise enough to seek for causes in effects. It is the ability to question everything as a value while she accepts it as a fact that gives Catherine Aysgarth her vitality as a character. The forces of life buffet her, break round her, destroying what she best loves, yet she remains aloof, an individual in the face of every call to be merely a wife or a mother. Her attitude baffles those about her, some because it seems a refusal of life, and some because it seems a too easy acceptance, each missing the point that it is both.

Contrasted with the complex character of Catherine the other people in the book tend to fall into types. This most emphatically cannot be said, however, of Thomsie, the most realistic and charming little girl in modern fiction, who never falls to the depth of being merely cute, but is a constant source of amusement. ("Paris is a wicked place. The Pope lives there. I'll draw him.") And the blinded Val, who says that anyone who is afflicted must choose between being a nonentity and a nuisance and who chooses herself to be wholeheartedly the latter, is more than a new specimen of the younger generation. She is an angle of bitterness after misfortune that it has taken courage and a steady hand to portray.

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Our Native Drama

A HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN DRAMA, FROM THE CIVIL WAR TO THE PRESENT DAY. By ARTHUR HOBSON QUINN. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1927. $10.

Reviewed by GEORGE C. D. ODELL

WITH the publication of these two volumes Professor Quinn may rest in the happy consciousness of having finished for a time a long, exacting labor of love. An ardent student of the American drama, he has traced, in an earlier portion of his history, the beginnings of our play-making down to the Civil War; these later books carry the chronicle from 1860 to the present day. Thanks to his research, his infinite patience, his energy in unearthing long-neglected manuscripts and rare printed matter, students may now survey the long stretch of our native drama from "The Prince of Parthia" to—shall I say?—"Lazarus Laughed." And, in the aggregate, the showing for American dramaturgy is impressive; the two later volumes reveal, on the part of our playwrights, constant progress in power and sweep of subject-matter and in expertness and delicacy of technical achievement. I know of no other book dealing with our dramatic literature that so successfully awakens this response in the reader.

The first volume of the pair now under consideration is, naturally, the more important for the scholar. It deals with men whose work is finished, either by death or by retirement, men in regard to whom it is possible to survey results impartially and with a certain finality. The last four decades of the nineteenth century are now seen to be years of effort toward the evolution of a drama dealing with native types and native situations, and clearly has Professor Quinn shown the service—in various ways—of men like Augustin Daly, James A. Herne, Augustus Thomas, David Belasco, William Gillette, and Clyde Fitch. Under those leaders our drama took shape and substance that we may view today with reasonable pride. Older readers will find genuine pleasure in reviving, through this narrative, memories of drama-delights of their youth; old faces will flash out, and surprise result from the cumulative impressiveness of the successful plays recalled. It is possibly to be regretted that the author has confined his research chiefly to plays printed or to be found in manuscript. Many old friends of the '70s and '80s are missing from the company, or but lightly discussed; Lotta's hilarious "Musette," for instance, or Annie Pixley's 'M'liss," or the long-cherished "The Mighty Dollar," the last of which contributed to popular speech; Bardwell Slote's "P. D. Q.," and Mrs. Gilflory's memorable "From Alpha to Omaha." But perhaps Professor Quinn's scholarly instinct balked at taking contemporary opinion of plays he could not find in type or in writing; at any rate, he is entitled to his own method. And many of the unprinted works, I imagine, were pretty poor plays. Fortunately, from the new era inaugurated by poets like William Vaughn Moody and Percy Mackaye, access to writings for the stage has been increasingly provided by the press.

Professor Quinn aptly discusses the changed attitude of playwrights of our century; their insistence on subjects dealing with personal liberty and with the right to live one's own life unhampered by convention or even by "duty." The second of the present volumes, dealing with authors of our own day, will, of course, make the wider appeal to casual readers and to the vast majority of playgoers who are unwilling to consider plays even of yesteryear—that large body of busy people engaged only in building today upon sands of forgetfulness. Here such readers will find admirable critical studies of the idols of the hour—Messrs. Stallings, Anderson, Sidney Howard, Kelly, O'Neill, Barry and Emery; these, with many others, receive sympathetic treatment from Professor Quinn, and some of them, I suspect, may be surprised and inspired to see ascribed to them artistic aims and purposes which they may have but dimly perceived themselves to possess. Professor Quinn, indeed, seems sometimes to over-exalt those aims and motives; but if thus he interprets his authors, I for one shall not quarrel with his judgment. He closes his record with a statement of his belief that there are more good playwrights today in America than in any other country. His enthusiasms is contagious, and we shall all look forward to his fourth volume, which will carry the story from 1928 to a "present" yet to be determined. We shall then have "placed" the very interesting group of today, and shall be watching hopefully the efforts of the Sidney Howards and O'Neills and Kellys of the future. Meantime, with our present guide, we contemplate with much satisfaction the interesting vistas of a past and a present that furnish groups for national pride.

Professor Quinn has performed a great service in making available so vast a quantity of material for students of our native drama; every one interested in American plays must own, for constant reference, the three volumes of the history which his enthusiasm has produced. And I trust that all will extend to him thanks for the enormous labor on his part which will make so easy the path of future workers in the same field.

The Theatre's Progress

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEATRE. By ALLARDYCE NICOLL. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 1927. $10.

Reviewed by DONALD MITCHELL OENSLAGER

TO understand the development of the theatre and its stage requires many forced marches among library stacks to gain a point of vantage either to look back over its history with some degree of critical intelligence or to look far enough ahead to discover new outlines of a continually changing theatre. Before Mr. Nicoll wrote his "Development of the Theatre" but one pioneer had covered this field. This was Karl Mantzius, whose "History of Theatrical Art" in six volumes, sometimes thin with fact, yet always stimulating, was soon outmoded by scholarly work of specialists, whose works contain illuminating but unrelated chapters on scenery and theatres: some of these works are R. C. Flickinger's "Greek Theatre," E. K. Chambers' "Mediæval Stage," W. J. Lawrence's "Elizabethan Studies" and Mr. Nicoll's own "Restoration Theatre." These were in turn supplemented by even more specialized theses, such as Gustav Cohan's "Histoire de la Mise-en-Scène au Moyen Age," and Winifred Smith's "The Commedia dell'-Arte." In addition to this research there are the dusty original manuscripts or source books and, of more importance, the fragmentary remains of old theatres still in existence.

In his "Development of the Theatre" Mr. Nicoll has drawn faithfully and expertly from all this mass of material and he has made of it a clear and critical study of the development of theatrical art from Æschylus, the first regisseur, to Meierhold, who today strips his stage of all tradition to its essential walls. Mr. Nicoll devotes a chapter to each period or important movement in the theatre and highlights its salient features either from the point of view of its stage structure, technical facilities, or staging. Unfortunately he does not silhouette the social environment and artistic force that stamp every period's particular style or dictate its form. In spite of this he succeeds in combining the sceneries and theatres of these highly differentiated periods so that each illumines its succeeding period and as a result keeps the main course of the theatre from slipping too far into the backwaters of academic routine. He traces clearly, though not for the first time, the origins of the modern picture-frame stage—from the doors of the Greek scene building, their use in the Renaissance theatre, and ultimate development into the proscenium arch. Similarly he indicates the use of machines in the Greek theatre, their revival in the Renaissance, their apotheosis in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and subsequent revival on the continent to-day. He traces the science of perspective as Serlio employed it in the theatre in 1545 after Vitruvius, to the pastoral romantic style of Drury Lane, to scene painting without perspective to-day. He notes the mutual influence of performance of miracles and mysteries on the works of medieval sculptors, painters, and glaziers. He justly elevates Filippo Juvarra, an eighteenth century architect-designer, to a new position for his experiments and designs, devised for the private theatre of Cardinal Ottoboni in Rome.

"The Development of the Theatre" is invaluable as a rare record of the theatre. Its two hundred and sixty illustrations have never before been assembled under one cover in such a way that as illustrations they practically serve as text. It would be asking too much of the text to expect it to serve in the capacity of illustration. Many of the illustrations are well known. But such a book without them would be like a map of the United States that did not include Washington or New York. There are many quoted passages in French, German, Italian, Latin, and Greek, all carefully translated in the footnotes, and a fairly complete bibliography is appended for each chapter.

One must admit that theatrical art is an art of many contributions. A book of such wide scope cannot fail to evoke indignation among devotees of certain periods and specialists in subjects within these periods. Mr. Nicoll has in almost every period left the author out of the question. He has admittedly "neglected the development of the nineteenth century continental theatres as these merely ran parallel to the English playhouses of the same time." It seems, however, that mention should have been made of Goethe's experiment with Shakespeare, the work of the Meiningen troup, Wagner's principles of architecture and production at Bayreuth, and Antoine's Theatre Libre. Mr. Nicoll may be justified in according little space to our twentieth century theatre. A teeming period, alive with exciting experiments in the contemporary theatres of Europe, he looks at it through a glass darkly from about 2027, and seeing, does not understand the intrinsic forces that manufacture life in our theatre today. This is a handicap that must eliminate from such a book any suggestion of fiery living in our past theatre. But this fire has cast shadows and it is these shadows that Mr. Nicoll's vast research has captured and made of great value for workers in the theatre.

Thespians of the Past

MAD FOLK OF THE THEATRE. By OTIS SKINNER. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1928

Reviewed by J. RANKEN TOWSE

IN his "Foot-lights and Spot-lights" Mr. Skinner, one of the few survivors of the old school of well-trained actors, proved that he was a sprightly and interesting anecdotist. He provides further evidence of the fact in this later volume, which reveals him as a diligent student of the vast mass of biographical gossip concerning the theatrical celebrities of past generations. For those already fairly familiar with the dramatic records of the pre-Victorian era he has nothing, or very little, that is new to tell. All his material is old and a trifle shop-worn, but he has known how to select from it judiciously and to dish up his extracts in fresh, lively, entertaining fashion, with a preference for spicy flavors, but a due regard for historical accuracy. For the host who know only the contemporary theatre this book will be both attractive and instructive.

He begins with a thumb-nail sketch—amusing, fairly vicious, but somewhat flippant—of stately old Thomas Betterton, and a brief review of the manners and customs of the early eighteenth century stage. In dealing with Nell Gwyn he finds, of course, an abundant supply of scandalous stuff whereof to make his choice, in the teeming diary of Pepys and other more or less trustworthy records. He quotes from them freely with a confidence that is not always justifiable. It would be easy enough to challenge the authority of some of the incidents which he relates. But he succeeds in drawing an animated and not altogether incredible picture of this seductive product of the grimy slums encircling the ancient Drury Lane Theatre.

Mr. Skinner has a pleasant, kindly and readable chapter on James Quin and Bath and a somewhat elaborate biography of George Anne Bellamy, the reckless, wilful and fascinating beauty, whose accomplishments, adventures, and misfortunes gave her great temporary prominence in the theatrical and fashionable worlds. She had her artistic triumphs, and her name, at various times, was associated with

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several much more famous than her own. Then she acquired a notoriety which has little or nothing in common with celebrity. In her story there is not much that is truly admirable, which accounts for the fact that it long ago faded into oblivion. But it undoubtedly contains certain elements of popularity, though not of the most precious kind, and in this present revival Mr. Skinner has cunningly used these to the best advantage.

The three so-called mad folk of the title are J. B. Booth, Edmund Kean, and George Frederick Cooke. The epithet is not the kindliest or the most accurate that might have been employed. Nor is it necessary at this late date to insist strongly upon the weakness which, in each case, was a lamentable flaw in an otherwise brilliant reputation. But Mr. Skinner does full justice to the histrionic powers of each member of the group and describes their respective personalities with engaging vivacity. He is a capital raconteur and never bores, being indeed obviously more anxious to tell a good story than he is about the respective values of his related facts. His sketch of Tate Wilkinson recalls a personality now pretty generally forgotten and is sufficiently interesting to induce casual readers to seek further information in the original sources. In the vicissitudes of the charming Dora Jordan—one of the cleverest and merriest comedians that ever trod the British stage—the constant victim of professional jealousy, personal intrigues and public scandals, he naturally finds a rich topic. The little woman had her troubles, but after all she was luckier than a good many mistresses of royalty, for her lover stood by her for twenty years and settled a liberal income upon her when he became king. It should be remembered in his favor that as heir to the throne he could not have married her legally without an act of parliament, which, of course, he could not get.

Your Money's Worth

(*Continued from page* 837)

as well as the "stunts" of the realists, would be far too speculative for a standardized list; every novelty in science, religion, esthetics, fantasy, which now is published on the chance of breaking past 2000 copies, would be eliminated on the ground of efficient selling.

We guarantee to draw up in advance from the book catalogues of any season a list of thirty books that could be produced and sold for one-half the present price, and with a certainty of profit. But what a dull list, what stereotyped books, what a sure way to pinch and starve all vital interest in reading! Something like this, according to Gilbert Murray, happened at the end of the classic period, and even though the best "sure-fire" classics were recopied for educational purposes, interest in literature died.

Fortunately books are not like other commodities—they are human and represent deep cravings of human nature. The stereotype produces its own reaction. Safe at first, it becomes speculative as soon as taste or education changes. And publishers (let us say in all fairness) have not been interested in standardizing books. They, too, are human.

If the public will buy with more discrimination, lists can be shortened—a little. The output of obviously mediocre books is the publishers' cynical response to a public that buys by the look of a cover and the sound of a name. Books can be made cheaper—a little; a great deal in the case of books that ought to be read by thousands instead of hundreds. Mere price cutting is not going to improve the situation. That may put the bookstore out of business. A book market without bookstores, where books can be bought on advice and kept for the taste of the individual, is a conceivable but not a happy outlook. Price cutting will inevitably result in list cutting, and once the campaign to make book manufacture efficient is under way, where will it stop? Can you not see the wholesaler's advertisement, "We have bought and consolidated all the Spring novels of Seekem and Printem, and now offer our new Synthetic Novel for this Spring, at fifty cents"? Fifty cents, yes, but for what!

Some books are clearly overpriced. Refuse to buy them. Others are good, but dear. If they are good, buy them; the next good books of that kind will be cheaper. Some books are dear at any price. A really good book at $2.50 is the best bargain obtainable anywhere. But it is socially unsound, whatever may be the economics of the situation, to make savings at the cost of the real value of the product. The question is not how to get books cheap; it is how to get good books at a fair price.

Mr. Moon's Notebook

April 27th: *Going Abroad, Are You?*

TILL several years ago it had always been a dream to me, the idea of crossing the Atlantic Ocean. And now I have gone abroad twice. And now it is no longer like being a believer in Heaven and having the experience always before you so long as you are on the earth. I did not take my maiden voyage in the first fine flush of youth in which everything seems miraculous, even the smooth-scrubbed rail and the scuppers. But I knew rail and scuppers from a journey across the Pacific taken when I was—not very—but rather young. That was a millpond voyage, both forth and back. Rather a large millpond, to be sure, but just as smooth as one. The Pacific was truly pacific. Well, despite Mr. Basil Woon, I did not find the Atlantic frantic.

From last year's experience I could become lyrical about Southampton Water, about the New Forest in England, about the English railway trains and their lunch-baskets. I could spend a large part of my life pleasantly riding around England and subsisting solely on the provender in lunch-baskets, with their wonderful bottles of Bass. I remember the only time I ever saw Oxford. How it rained! I overlooked it soppily from the tiles of the Radcliffe Camera. We spent an awed afternoon in the Bodleian. But I must see the High some day in full sunlight. That experience is yet to come.

The year before, Paris was tremendously exciting. I first became acquainted with a *fine*, or rather, with many—with a monumental goblet of beer at Lipp's—with champagne cocktails at the Continentale. We penetrated into the depths of one supposedly Apache den. It was drawn pretty mild for us. But even at this late date the bugles of the Paris taxis are still in my ears. And I keenly remember viewing the Eiffel tower all magically alight from the balcony of an apartment in the Trocadero. I don't know how I got around Paris as much as I did without knowing any French, or little or none. But then everybody tells me that that is quite an ordinary performance. There are so many Americans.

True, there are so many Americans. Therefore, I was less embarrassed in the shops of Paris than I was in London. Because I realized in England that the tables were turned. It was *my* way of speaking the English language that sounded a little funny. It even began to sound a little funny in my own ears, so that I—who have always felt scornful of Americans who pick up an English accent—was reduced to a succinctness of utterance quite unusual with me. I even began to say, "Oh, quaite."

But I must say that all the English people I met were extremely nice; even though I had become, by that time, in sheer self-defense, most abominably "cagey." Next time, perhaps, I shall be more natural. In the country I came to understand the Englishman's love for his land, which is, I think, a little different from the love for his land of the man of any other nation. Perhaps I am wrong. But I am not talking about patriotism. I am speaking of what Masefield has called

> Such dumb loving of the Berkshire loam
> As breaks the dumb hearts of the English kind.

* * *

In our village, wild ponies strayed down the roads, and enormous black pigs roamed around, rooting mast under the trees. And one evening, coming home in the dark, I perceived an uncanniness about these shadowily moving animal forms that made me understand that strangest tale of Arthur Machen's, of how the trees and the animals gradually closed in about a certain house and the weald by stealthy invasion came back into its own. But something that moved me sentimentally more than anything else, almost, was the first sight of English holly—there is nothing else quite like that dark, glossy viridian.

I can report that the Thames seems to me the coldest river in which I have ever bathed. And I am now a convert with no reservations to the English tea, though I never dream of drinking tea in this country, when I can get a cocktail. As to shipboard, the getting oneself forth and back to and from foreign parts—I have either had very good luck or am a fair sailor. And I enjoy every moment of a voyage. Even discomforts, when they are present, are quaint. I like all the paraphernalia. I even like unlatching and letting down a cupboard washbasin. If I had a regular washstand, it would not be nearly so much fun.

Of course I am a "little picture" addict. I mean that when I go through the National Gallery or the Louvre, the British Museum or the Carnavalet, I accumulate postal cards. For my recollection is atrocious, and I like to preserve visual impressions. Shuffling my postal cards stirs up a sluggish memory. You may call me a typical tourist. I don't care.

What I have seen of England and France, and that means Paris only, in France, has necessarily been most hurried. But then, when I look back upon it, most of my later life has been like that. What I have seen of the United States, since I grew up, aside from California and New York, has been in rapid transit. I have certain memories, for instance, of the red clay of Georgia—but sometimes I wonder whether I have ever really been in Georgia. During the War, at a training school, I came to know the grounds of Ohio University (under heavy snow) rather intimately. I used to go to the movies in Fort Worth, Texas. And that too now seems like something somebody else did in a story.

* * *

Today the opportunity for almost anybody to "get about a bit" is large and easy. And the way one can be rushed on trains—from one end of the continent of America, for instance, to the other, is a caution. The amount of American territory that an English lecturer can see through train windows is quite imposing. Of course, it is bromidic to aver that that is no way to know any country. I do not for an instant pretend that I know anything at all about either England or France. It was simply that I closed my eyes, and there I was, and things made actual, that heretofore had merely been pictures in books, were all around me. And there were so many things to do and people to see that there was but little time to card-index and classify impressions. As for the human beings, they acted like human beings, quite as I had expected. True, I couldn't understand what the French were talking about, but I made a not very brilliant guess that they were talking about much the same things as do the English, and as do we. The English people I met naturally cared more or less for the kind of thing that constituted my own main interest: books, writers, the literary world in general. We didn't talk so very differently about them.

Had I expected it to be otherwise? No, of course not. I cannot understand the Englishman who still thinks that red Indians ride around the streets of Chicago. There are not many—I mean, Englishmen who think so. But some do. And if any American, in this day and generation, has a comic-opera-stage idea of the English, again I can't understand it. Yet not by any means was my first view of white-cliffed Albion a matter of "Huh, just what I expected." We passed Plymouth Hoe the first time we landed. Before we took the train up to London I had tasted Devonshire cream. Through the poems of Sir Henry Newbolt, chiefly, Devon has always seemed the land of the blest to me. I am sure I was really born to be a Devon man. There was amiable light along that countryside as we sped through it on the train—and that is the last I have seen of it. "Devon, oh Devon, in wind and rain." But I hope I may live to return and explore that shire some day. It rhymes with Heaven, and should repay investigation.

A lady fond of horses, a very friendly lady, perceived, politely, no great difference in my pronunciations from English pronunciations. "Only, you know, you *do* say Amurrican." I denied the soft impeachment. But it made me self-conscious. So, on a railway platform, saying goodbye to the son of a friend, I found myself turning to him and remarking fervently, "I do hope you will come to Amurrica some day!" The "mur" positively burbled in my ears. But I am sure I never said it before.

We are sure of a great many things. And that is why it does us a great deal of good to wander abroad and see ourselves through the eyes of the older countries. And I can never "see off" anyone on a ship now without wishing that I, too, were going. For I have only had a taste of what I should like to discover for myself. I opened my eyes again. And no, here I was right here, in a large office-building sitting before a typewriter. Yet I remember buying an ash-plant for a shilling in a shop in Burley. And I remember my first sight of an actual Leonardo and my first sight of the works of Rubens in the

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Louvre. Those ladies are more to scale when you see them in enormous barnlike corridors. But everybody has traveled nowadays. They "just run over." And did I ever really see a bit of it? I rub my eyes.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

(*To be continued*)

A Great Personality

THE COLLECTED PLAYS OF JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company. 1927. $3.

THE COLLECTED POEMS OF JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company. 1927. $3.

Reviewed by JOHN HYDE PRESTON

I SUPPOSE that to the average well-read American, the name of Josephine Preston Peabody conjures up very little, save the memory of a play called "The Piper," which had its first success some fifteen or twenty years ago, and has survived. Some may recall "The Wolf of Gubbio," others the "Portrait of Mrs. W."—but "The Piper" is outstanding among her works. And yet, in spite of this, it does not, somehow, seem greatly imminent to us or tremendously vital in the viewpoint of our modern world. It is an excellent play; it contains some beautiful poetry; yet we are curiously cool towards it—cool, indeed, towards all her plays. Why should this be, this coolness?

Well, in the first place, Josephine Peabody was not primarily a dramatist, and only "The Piper" ever made a very startling impression upon theatre audiences. That was because it is, from the standpoint of technique, her best work. For, after all, she was first and last a poet, who happened to have a longing for dramatic creation. By nature she possessed a love for movement and action, but she never quite learned how to write a play. I think she herself would have been the first to confess this; she was a woman who (being rare among women) knew her own failings very well. And being honest with herself, she never pretended that fine poetry might atone for any weaknesses of construction; she remembered Shakespeare and her beloved Marlowe far too well for that! So she struggled, and in the "Portrait of Mrs. W." she almost emerges as victor. A few more years, and she might have triumphed. But they were not to be granted. Just as she was reaching the heights, a slow but fatal illness wearied her out, and the play of Mary Wollstonecraft saw the end of her labours.

Yet all the while, from "Fortune and Men's Eyes" up to the last, her sense of character and situation constantly grew. In her earliest work the idea of character is there, but it makes no very lasting impression; in the "Portrait of Mrs. W.," however, it simply stands forth. For example, I think she has brought out the essential reason for the misunderstanding between Shelley and Godwin more satisfactorily than any biographer. The fact is, that the Godwin whom Shelley worshipped—the Godwin of "Political Justice"—was not the same man whom he knew later as a father-in-law. Godwin had lived since he wrote his famous book; strange things had come into his life; he was a changed man. Shelley's main difficulty was that he could not see, or refused to see, the change. In a few simple words Josephine Peabody conveys this to us, and makes us see Godwin more in pity than irony.

Among her plays, I myself confess to liking "Marlowe" above all the others. I suppose "The Piper" is a finer work in most ways, but somehow it does not mean as much to me. As a matter of fact, I think "The Wolf of Gubbio" superior to "The Piper," save for one sad blemish. I protest—you may accuse me of lack of imagination, but I still protest—that to endow a wolf with a human voice and human reasoning powers, is carrying a symbol to the point of absurdity. Of course, even such a man as Blake can be accused of this same emotional fallacy, but to find it, almost as a factor, in a serious, well thought-out play for the twentieth century stage!—oh, well, it troubles my peace.

As I have said, Josephine Preston Peabody was primarily a poet. Hers were essentially the poet's senses, the poet's reactions, the poet's viewpoint. Poetry was her birthright, whereas drama was, in the larger measure, a cultural acquisition. In her *juvenilia* "The Wayfarers," there speaks already a voice clear and musical, but a voice that is not yet sure of its high notes; it has not yet found its true technique nor its true self, having not altogether graduated from Victorianism, with its "opes" and "I wot's." It is, most of it, extraordinarily youthful, with a limited play of emotions and and a medley of echoes from those who had gone before her. "Horizons," however, is a thing one must mention as being above the rest, a kind of prelude to her maturer work.

In the poems from "Fortune and Men's Eyes" her vision broadens; here dreams leave the bookshelves of this first inspiration and come closer to life; and, accordingly, there is a greater depth, as disillusion crowds down upon the young singer, and more restraint—while the full-fledged poet emerges slowly, and the figure of the dreaming girl fades away.

> Who shall know with what new gifts
> Life may make me wise?

You will see that she is conscious of her growth, of a larger maturity; but that very consciousness itself is a sign that she is still young; she is looking for experience. But life's profoundest changes come

Josephine Preston Peabody

with no blare of trumpets; they come quietly, unnoticed, and one grows suddenly richer in some strange way, and one's voice grows deeper and mellower—and one never knows quite how, or why.

And when this comes over Josephine Peabody, she naturally but sings on, without announcing the change, being hardly conscious of it. But it was this that produced "The Singing Man"—perhaps the most vitally human of all her poems—and the two magnificent sonnets, "Dominion" and "Military Necessity," in "Harvest Moon: 1916." The pretty notions of youth are gone; it is a woman profoundly sincere, deep, and direct who speaks here.

For a long time while she was held powerfully by the theory that life must be noble, or nothing. Poetry, she felt, is "the richest expression of noblest ideals." But as she advanced, this idea of exclusive nobility became fainter and fainter in her mind. One must be human first, she found, and then—well, perhaps being human is the highest form of nobility, all things considered. I would not say that she ever became exactly Epicurean, but she came at least to know the value of *intensity* in life and poetry, the value—indeed, the necessity—of burning with Pater's "hard, gem-like flame." And so her technique becomes closer, more chiselled. She fell, if I see correctly, under the influence of Francis Thompson, for certainly that great symphony of motherhood, "Canticle of the Babe," and the splendid "Pietà," bear witness to his voice. But language did not play the same tricks with her that it played with Thompson. She is clear, keenly, painfully clear; she says what life forces her to say. No more the old apprentice days when she confessed:

> Sometimes I don't know what to Think
> —Till I begin to Sing.

It is a complete portrait of a woman that stands forth here—a woman who lived life well, intensely, and set it down in verse that is highly significant in her time. But whether much of it is significant for all time, I seriously doubt. She was a great personality, certainly!

Morley at His Best

TOULEMONDE. By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company. 1928.

Reviewed by MORRIS BISHOP

THE faithful readers of the *Saturday Review* need only to be told that "Toulemonde" has appeared in a very gracious and harmonious volume. The pleasure of reading the poem as a whole on these broad white pages should justify many in throwing away their clippings.

To this reviewer "Toulemonde" is the best of Morley. Here is Morley the poet, no longer cavorting to amuse the children nor dressing up as a sea-captain or a scholar gipsy to amuse himself. Here is Morley deep in sincerity, suddenly aware of the passing of youth's ardor and lamenting it in an aching elegy. And here, in rich measure, is the Morley who, a dozen years ago, helped some of us to a new way of regarding the world.

Plenty of others before him discovered that this machine-built civilization can be, to the unblinkered eye, a wonderland of startling beauty.

But Morley brought us something of his own: an adjuration to look at familiar things, a subway entrance, a wizened city tree, an excavation in Herald Square, to see therein lovely forms, and hence deep analogies, and hence the grateful joy escaping to meet the loving mind. The realists of our time are loud preachers of boredom; from Morley's realism we learn that boredom is incredible.

"Toulemonde" is full of just such indications of unheeded beauty. The poet catches our arm and points; "oh yes," we say, "why of course!"

> So in this town
> Where men up-end their poetry on sky,
> Flash it in chains of crawling yellow cars
> Round Elevated curves on rainy nights.
>
> My antic rodents
> Nibble through my crumbly insulations
> And cause what (I believe?) they call Short Circuit,
> A Ground, a homesick spark. All kinds of joy
> Are hungry always to get back to earth.

The theme (which has its puzzling moments) is the old and necessary one of the escape of our youthful part, the passing of our sense of unbelonging in the world, the discovery that, while nodding, we have signed an act of adhesion with the universe. The theme is carried through six cantos, or stages, or whatever you like to call them, with two interludes or interruptions. The final canto, "Lady Macbeth," is to this reviewer, the most sustained, the most beautiful in design, tone, and ornament, and hence the most evocative of a responsive mood.

Such a personal testimony, abhorrent as it is to the writer, seems necessary in an honest report on a volume of poetry. Your tests and scales and poetic litmus are very handy in the judgment of a work of art, but the test that most of us desire is the statement whether the poet's emotion can awaken sympathetic vibrations in us. Our contemporary poets, mostly, are scornful of such base applications; and this is no doubt the reason for the degradation of the poet in our world. The poet, once the seer, the light-bringer, now busies himself with strange hermetic rituals. He is occupied with exercises in poetic rhetoric, and therefore he has been abandoned by the people. But Morley has no scorn for his public; shamelessly (and with the best of precedent) he brings the most beautiful things he can find in himself to us, the intellectual upper middle class.

There will be plenty to sneer at these words. The band of Morley-haters (Morley would find a name for them: the misomorleietes, the antichrisses) will find in "Toulemonde" just what they expected; posturing, preciosity, an effort to find tremendous significance where, they will say, there is no significance at all. Well, it all depends on what one sees in the world; on one's apprehension of reality, in short. On this head we cannot argue.

As for style, enemy and friend alike can pick out slovenly, grotesque, and dissonant lines. "Warm April night, trees not in folio," for instance. Or,

> Old-Fashioned cocktails,
> Each with its orange slices and its cherry,
> Pretty as an armada of old Spain.

Such lines illustrate a large number of Morley's faults. But perhaps you will find them pleasantly whimsical.

The interludes seem to this reviewer out of place.

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The Bowling Green

Anna Faure and the Parrot

EDMUND PEARSON begins his excellent new book "Five Murders" (one of the first publications of the Crime Club) with the case of Frederick Small, "The Man Who Was Too Clever." The too-cleverness of Mr. Small consisted in an attempt to cash a $20,000 insurance policy by making it seem that his wife (his third wife, to be exact) had perished in a fire that destroyed their cottage on Lake Ossipee in September 1916. The truth, as Mr. Pearson narrates in his own caustic way, was that Mr. Small, in spite of his carefully fabricated alibi at room 113 in Young's Hotel, Boston, had assassinated Mrs. Small before he left home that afternoon, and contrived to start the fire some hours later by a time clock and an ingenious arrangement of dry batteries. Mr. Small paid the penalty for his crime more than ten years ago, but I felt a queer sort of intimacy when I saw that the drawing of him in the courtroom, reprinted by Mr. Pearson, was done by my old friend Haydon Jones, once cartoonist of the *Evening Post*. For Mr. Jones used to amuse himself in his spare time by making etchings of even so unmurderous people as his colleagues on that ancient newspaper.

But any rousing crime story always takes me back to my favorite Bataille: *Causes Criminelles et Mondaines*. Alas that most of Bataille is certainly of too strong a flavor for the public stomach of the Crime Club. But there is one little story in Bataille, also an insurance fraud, of which I was immediately reminded. It also deals with a $20,000 policy and an idyllic rural retreat; it has not the ingenious phases of the Small case; but there are aspects of it that seem to me picturesque. M. Bataille calls it the story of the Young Girl and the Parrot, and we may as well stick to his title.

* * *

We spoke, some weeks ago, about Mademoiselle de Sombreuil and her trip to Marseilles. When she was in that city she may well have ridden in a trolley car; and it is even possible that if so, the conductor of the trolley car may have been a certain Etienne Cournou. I'm sorry that he was only the conductor, not the "wattman," which always seems to me such a delicious French term for the motorman. But at any rate he was rather a shady person, had held various kinds of jobs, and was so little trusted by those who knew him best that when his wife lay dying she would accept no medicine from his hands, fearing to be poisoned. His conduct at the time of his wife's funeral was not marked by delicacy: he and a high-spirited female whom we know only as "la femme Clémencet" walked together in the procession with so cheery a mien that it caused some scandal. The Clémencet person had the hardihood (so at any rate the prosecution construed it) to lay a wreath on the poor woman's coffin; and the ceremony was interrupted by the undertaker's insistence on being paid; which was done by taking up a collection among those present. Yet it appears that this ruffian Cournou had his own notions of propriety, for the day after the funeral he ejected his mother-in-law from his premises. "Je ne voulais pas être accusé d'être son amant, en vivant seul avec elle."

The Clémencet person was now Cournou's mistress. I suspect her of having been a creature of schemes and ambitions. She had a friend, some say rather more than a friend, M. Ardisson, a grain dealer, who seems to have been a simpleton with available cash. The days of trolley-conducting were now over, Cournou and Clémencet concocted more grandiose plans. Cournou was a plausible scoundrel, and managed to wangle money out of Ardisson with arguments whose purport will appear later. In the month of March, 1891, we find him visiting an employment agency anxious to hire a servant. His requirements deserve scrutiny. He must have "a young girl from 22 to 25 years of age, of attractive physique, well raised, discreet, gentle and mannerly, and knowing no one in Marseilles." Nor would he leave his name and address at the office. Madame Negré, the head of the employment bureau, was evidently not over scrupulous. Several likely young women were rejected by Cournou because they had friends in the city. They were lucky.

Enters then our heroine, the unfortunate Anna Faure. She had just come down from the country to find a job; by some evil chance she enrolled with Madame Negré. Cournou saw her and was delighted. She accepted a job at 35 francs a month.

She must have been heartily astounded at her first experience as a domestic in the big city. Cournou and Clémencet installed her in their apartment, and instead of having any work to do she found herself put through a sort of beauty course. She was given a blue silk kimono (or perhaps even two kimonos, for it is referred to in the testimony sometimes as blue and sometimes as pink). Her hair was rearranged in the urban mode; Clémencet, an expert in all such matters, taught her to pencil her eyebrows and even to take a bath. Anna's buxom country rondures were slenderized by gymnastics and special diet, and the kind of underwear they gave her might well have caused her delicious pangs of apprehension. But the purpose of all this (done at Ardisson's expense) was not at all what you might have supposed.

* * *

There are many reasons why I should like to visit Marseilles; and if I ever get there I want to explore a suburban region called the Valley of Oriol. While his mistress was drilling and perfuming the astounded Anna, Cournou was house-hunting in the suburbs. Well provided with the grain dealer's money, he found no difficulty in renting the picturesque Villa Rosa. It is not hard to imagine it as it may have been in those sirupy airs of Mediterranean April. A modest plaster or stucco cottage, I suppose, and behind it a walled garden of flowers and shrubbery. There were pebble walks in that cheerful garden, and a shallow stone pool surrounded by rose bushes. What the simple-minded Anna may have thought about such luxury we can only conjecture, for there is no testimony remaining on this earth, I suppose, as to any of her ideas. Already sufficiently astonished by the easy life she found herself leading, the Villa Rosa was only one more miracle. Shortly before they moved to the villa, a gentleman had called to see her at the apartment of her benefactors; Clémencet had seen to it that the girl was looking her best; the rose-colored peignoir and the other toilet accessories had been in requisition; Anna was carefully coached in deportment. She was introduced as a young kinswoman of the house of Cournou, and there were documents involved. Whether Anna had to sign them herself I don't know; if so, she probably had little notion what they were all about. Perhaps, as a reader of such feuilletons as were available for French country girls in 1891, she may even have imagined a romance and a betrothal contract.

At any rate, on the 15th of April they occupied the Villa Rosa. In so small a household—only Monsieur, Madame, and Madame's little girl—the domestic tasks were light. Madame and Anna shared them together, but Anna's status was that of a member of the family. The neighbors took it for granted that she was Monsieur's mistress, and Clémencet a duenna of sorts. There was plenty of time for strolling in the garden, for playing with the child, for thinking how superior all this was to the life of a village in the Drôme, her native department. And if the burly Cournou, with his upward curled moustaches and his rather savage air, seemed a trifle ominous after some of his excursions to town on business, the bright air of Oriole Valley soon restored him. Tramway conducting was never alluded to: Cournou was now the suburban gentleman. He wore grey check trousers and a white waistcoat, he drank his wine sitting comfortably in shirtsleeves on the pebbled *terrasse*, and was observed to be specially pleased with the ornamental pool and the rose bushes.

There was another member of the ménage whom I have forgotten to mention, who was also much pleased with the garden. This was M. Cournou's parrot, who was so exhilarated by the move to the country that when her cage was cleaned (she is explicitly alluded to as a female parrot) she several times flitted out into the shrubbery and had to be recaptured. Perhaps the parrot was the most important of the whole household: if it had not been for her perhaps neither M. Bataille nor ourselves would ever have heard of the Villa Rosa.

* * *

On the morning of the 6th of May M. Chabrol, an officer of the Marseilles police, was hastily summoned to the Villa Rosa. There M. Cournou, in great agitation, explained the tragic thing that had happened. Madame had left the house about half-past eight to take her child to school. He himself had gone out for a stroll—to taste the morning air, one supposes. Returning, so he said, about nine, he had found the door locked, rang the bell without result; finally borrowed a ladder from a neighbor and scaled the garden wall. There a sad sight greeted him. Anna Faure was lying dead in the little pool, and beside her floated the draggled corpse of the pet parrot. The tragedy, according to Cournou, was not hard to reconstruct. Anna had been cleaning the bird-cage. The parrot had flown out and got into the rose-bushes. Chasing it, Anna must have clutched the bird, stumbled on the edge of the basin, and fallen in. There was only eighteen inches of water in the pool, but apparently, in falling, the girl had struck her head against the stone coping and stunned herself. There was indeed, as Chabrol immediately saw, a gruesome contusion at the back of her head. But the doctor, who was immediately called, saw no reason to disbelieve the facts as stated, and certified the death by accidental drowning.

M. Chabrol, for whom one conceives an immediate admiration, was not quite easy in his mind. The rim of the pool was perfectly flat and offered no occasion of stumbling. He noticed too a scratch on Cournou's right hand. He consulted another doctor, and had a second autopsy performed. Again the professional opinion was that the death was an accident. But still Chabrol was not satisfied. If he could not get convincing testimony from the body of poor Anna, there was still another corpse available, and one less hedged about by legal sanctities. He returned to Oriole Valley and took charge of the body of the parrot. With this he went to the Medical College and had an examination made. The authorities stated flatly that the bird had not died of drowning. It had been strangled first and then thrown into the water. Anna Faure's body was post mortem'd yet again, and this time the decision was reversed. The highest medical authority in Marseilles testified that death was due to the blow on the back of the head. Cournou was arrested on the charge of murder; and immediately the agent of the *La France* insurance company came forward. Cournou had insured the girl's life, only a few weeks previously, for the sum of 100,000 francs; and M. Ardisson was the beneficiary of the policy.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

(*To be continued*)

The Musketeers Revived

THE YEARS BETWEEN. By PAUL FEVAL AND M. LASSEZ. Translated by Cleveland B. Chase. 2 vols. New York: Longmans, Green. 1928. $5.

Reviewed by JOHN GERARD

DUMAS leaves a gap of twenty years between "The Three Musketeers" and its sequels, "The Vicomte De Bragelonne," "Twenty Years After," etc. Were d'Artagnan, his three gallant friends, Athos, Porthos and Aramis, and all the rest of that brave crew that throng the pages of Dumas' immortal work inactive during those twenty years? "Surely not!" is the answer of Feval and Lassez, and the two volumes of this book, "The Mysterious Cavalier" and "Martyr to the Queen," are a very commendable effort to bridge that gap.

The authors at once disarm one by a genial reference to Dumas's preface in their own. Dumas, it will be remembered, professes merely to be giving us the transcription of a manuscript entitled "Memories of the Comte De La Fere" which he has taken —he informs us modestly—the occasional liberty of altering though never without improving on it. Feval and Lassez enter delightfully into the spirit of the game, attributing their manuscript to a lucky chance which enables them to find it in the possession of one Grimaud, a direct descendant of the quiet servant of Athos.

With the turning of the first page we are in the midst of the colourful life of seventeenth century Paris, where the great Cardinal Richelieu wove his delicate webs of intrigue, and picturesque, swashbuckling soldiers of fortune occasionally succeeded in cutting them! D'Artagnan, Cyrano de Bergerac, the musketeers, the mysterious Cavalier Tancrède, in love with a charming maid of honour of the Queen, are among the many figures in the swiftly moving drama of events that succeed one another with an almost breath-taking rapidity. . . . But it would be unfair to do more than hint at the gorgeous adventures with which these two volumes are packed!

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Books of Special Interest

An Ebony Sovereign

BLACK MAJESTY. By JOHN W. VANDERCOOK. New York: Harper & Bros. 1928.

Reviewed by GERTRUDE MATHEWS SHELBY

STYLES in sentimentality change from generation to generation. First we put a halo over one thing, now another. Of late the negro race has come in for its suffering share. Ask negroes what they desire, they generally ask only for truth and justice, not favor or false illusion.

Serious books about blacks which fall into the error of sentimental emotion often react against negroes generally rather than their authors. "Black Majesty" is pleasing, effectively arranged, and written with a fiction technique of no mean order; had John W. Vandercook avoided calling it a "life of Henry Christophe," and dubbed it romance, one must have relished the book not a little; attractive illustrations, handsome format, literary performance, and content.

Unfortunately, while "not intended as a work of reference," its author advances the claim that this account of the third negro ruler of Haiti is historically sound. "I have added nothing to the sparse records of old books, and the fading memories that linger in the minds of men of his country. Nor have I left out anything, except a few foolish yet extraordinarily common legends that I found have no historical basis whatever." In all seriousness he states, "There were two men of transcendent genius then, Napoleon of France, and the King of Haiti, the only man alive who had defeated him in war." Comment is unnecessary, but among others, Washington was then alive.

It appears that Vandercook does not avoid exaggeration and special pleading. Did Christophe beat the French? While Toussaint l'Ouverture, Jean Jacques, Christophe, Pétion, and other black Abolitionists warred hard in the cause of negro liberty, the French had captured and deported Toussaint, and reduced the rest practically to brigand chieftains long before Haiti fell. Not the negroes' own prowess, but two factors for which they were not responsible changed the result. The British sent a squadron to the West Indies to frustrate Napoleon. When it arrived, four-fifths of the French army had been wiped out by yellow fever. The blacks rallied, of course, yet not to them, but to the British did Rochambeau tender his sword. He departed captive, with his officers, under the Union Jack. Mainly because in that time of Continental wars neither the English nor the French could spare men or money to hold the island, it was left to the negroes to enjoy the fruits of a victory by no means all their own.

With Jean Jacques in command, and no rubber stamp either, with Pétion among other leaders regarded as important as Christophe in military strategy, Christophe's title to a defeat of Napoleon, even by absent treatment is, to say the least, insecure. Of this and other matters Mr. Vandercook sometimes says first too much and then explains too little. Expatiating on the cruelty of whites to blacks, he fails to mention that Jean Jacques, having assured the whites safety after he came to rule, massacred them. This is not legend, according to Lothrop Stoddard, who gives his source.

True, Haitian history is heavy with tradition, larded here and there by the fat of facts. Yet it often appears that Vandercook cherishes certain "fading memories" while excluding others not in line with the real theme of the book, which is a dramatization of the mighty capacities and occult powers of the negro. To extol Christophe is an agreeable task. Capacities in the man, recognized by all, were, however, realized only in a few instances; to wit, the great Citadel he compelled his population to build on a mountain top, recently seen from the air by Lindbergh. The ex-slave, turned slave-driver of an alleged free population did, it is true, make Haiti productive—sufficiently so that he managed to collect six million dollars worth of gold (according to Vandercook) and sent it to England for the use of his black Queen Marie Louise. He did it by imposing hours of labor on the entire population he ruled that showed dim appreciation of the concepts of liberty.

The occult powers of the negro in this book, as in "Tom Tom," are rather overdone. To exploit magic, black or white, may sell books. Labelled romance, its successful handling requires genius. Labelled history, the easy reading it offers the sentimental does not affect its character as bunk. Primitive yellow, black, and white races, as well as the civilized, have observed and used many devices they could not explain, but the scientific ethnologist knows better than to class them as magic or to confuse superstition with occultism.

Mr. Vandercook's talent is really too good to be hampered by the seriousness demanded of the historical crusader determined to exalt the blacks. Were the limits of fact lifted, King Christophe, surrounded by his unspeakably fantastic court and used as hero in a novel, might be a superb creature, grotesque, cruel, but really great. It is recorded that he was waited upon by fifteen Grand Chamberlains, as many more Grand Marshals, Grand Masters of Palaces, Grand Masters of Castles, Grand Cupbearers, seven Grand Huntsmen, the two dukes of Limonade and Marmelade (the French so named two towns, the negroes made duchies of them), and an equally distinguished military entourage. All these ebony knights and their sovereign, got up in bright blue French uniforms and other grandeur, behaving with rigid solemnity, offer a trim parody of King Arthur and Round Table chivalry. This fearful court, obsessed by the question, "What will you do when the French come?" would be a picture to conjure with.

"Black Majesty" has a certain vivid grace. If read as a fluent tale with a biographical basis, but not as history, it will be enjoyed.

All Star Cast

SEAPORTS IN THE MOON. By VINCENT STARRETT. New York. Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1928. $2.50.

Reviewed by HULBERT FOOTNER.

MR. STARRETT has undertaken to tell a story with Francis Villon, Christopher Columbus, Ponce de Leon, Don Quixote, Ferdinand and Isabella, François Rabelais, D'Artagnan, Cyrano de Bergerac, Alexander Pope, Lady Mary Montagu, Long John Silver, Major André, Edgar Allan Poe, and others for his principal characters. A phial containing the miraculous waters of Bimini serves as a string upon which to thread these pearls. It is all spoofing of course, as the author expressly tells you in his preface, and uncommon ingenious, but one wonders why Mr. Starrett handicapped himself in this manner. He can tell a good story, that is evident; why smother it under an all-star cast? As in all such shows, there cannot be any real teamwork, especially when two stars are brought on the stage together. Picture Cyrano as a mere feeder to D'Artagnan! Those who are acquainted with these old worthies will certainly resent Mr. Starrett's extremely cavalier treatment of their favorites, while those who don't know them may well wonder what it is all about. In short, it is a Gargantuan task and inevitably it does not quite come off.

Some of the characters such as Long John, the jocose scoundrel, are pleasantly reconstructed, and many of the scenes are highly diverting. There is that moment in Long John's stable where a rather unpleasant recumbent man is being described, and the author remarks as by an afterthought: "He was dead." This is worthy of the author of "The Wrong Box." But to illustrate the handicap that Mr. Starrett has given himself take the scene between Cyrano and D'Artagnan. If they were called something else it would be the liveliest of scenes and a delicious parody of all that sort of thing. When they are named Cyrano and D'Artagnan it becomes something else again. This reviewer never cared much for Cyrano (Rostand's Cyrano) who seemed to him rather a bloodless and cerebral figment, and he doesn't mind what Mr. Starrett does to him; but a lover of D'Artagnan is outraged in his tenderest feelings when he finds his hero represented as eating with a loud noise, and wiping his mouth on his sleeve. Very likely he did, but Dumas does not suggest it; to his original creator he was the gentleman of fallen fortunes.

The golden phial comes to rest at last in a second-hand bookshop of to-day, and the story ends in a blaze of jocular philosophizing. A booklover is introduced who is unique in fiction inasmuch as he prefers new books to old books. Certain opinions of actual masterpieces are offered which sound a clarion challenge in the ears of a reviewer, but this one with immense self-restraint declines to pick up the gage. Let the reader find out for himself what are Mr. Starrett's chosen few.

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A Letter from Canada

By WILLIAM ARTHUR DEACON

WHILE 1926 was chiefly notable for the display of poetic talent, as seniors brought out collected or definitive editions and juniors made substantial contributions, 1927 was mainly a year of achievement in prose. During the last seven years, interest in native writers and their work has been growing rapidly and steadily; and has now reached a point where the Associated Canadian Clubs have recently conducted successful lecture and recital tours for two Canadian authors—E. J. Pratt, a poet, and Frederick Philip Grove, a novelist. Formerly poets of reputation, such as Carman, Roberts and MacDonald, had been able to carry through extensive recital tours, visiting the universities and literary groups; but the Pratt and Grove tours were entirely different, as their audiences were non-literary ones made up of representative business and professional men.

No particular author or book is responsible. A few years ago some of these authors who are being lionized were unable to get any sort of a hearing. In the interim the country has become aware of the merit of their work and of the vital function of art, and literature in particular, in the national development. Most universities offer some kind of a course in Canadian literature, the schools of some provinces are using selections from Canadian authors for reading lessons, and Charles G. D. Roberts —Canada's senior man of letters—has just completed his first course as resident lecturer on Canadian literature at the University of British Columbia. Lately there has been established an annual award of a gold medal "for distinguished service to Canadian literature," of which Roberts, Duncan Campbell Scott and Bliss Carman have been recipients.

The winning of the *Atlantic Monthly* prize by Mazo de la Roche's "Jalna" will probably turn out to be a less significant event than the appearance of Frederick Philip Grove's "A Search for America," which is soon to be published also in Great Britain and the United States. Grove, a man of 57, of Swedish-Scottish parentage, and a graduate of a Swedish university, migrated to Canada in 1894; and after a childhood spent in travel and an atmosphere of luxury settled down as a farm-hand in Manitoba, where his chief interests were writing and teaching the children of the foreign-born. Ultimately he became a high-school principal in the village of Rapid City, where he still lives. He is six feet two inches in height, of commanding personality, and, except for his eyes, his looks betray little of the thirty years of poverty, hardship, illness and disappointment he has endured.

His first books to be published, entitled "Over Prairie Trails" and "The Turn of the Year" (1922, 1923), are collections of splendidly firm descriptive essays that had been written in 1917 and 1919 respectively. "Settlers of the Marsh," a grim novel, was under construction from 1902 till 1917. On its publication in 1925, its circulation was hindered by its being banned by the Winnipeg Public Library. The acclaim that greeted "A Search for America" has sent all three of the former books into new editions; and another novel, "Our Daily Bread," which the author describes as "unrelieved tragedy," is to be published in New York next autumn. Grove's present popularity has put him above the danger line for his own daily bread.

"A Search for America," written in 1894-95, when the bitterness of his struggles as an immigrant was still fresh upon him, takes the form of a novel, but is almost pure autobiography. It tells of the arrival of the cultured European youth in Toronto, where the only job he could get was that of bus-boy in a cheap restaurant. From that he rose to be a waiter, and with a goodly accumulation of tips sought New York—the "America" of his dreams, the land of potential Lincolns, of freedom, opportunity, and fair play. Promptly fleeced of his money by a confidence trick, he became innocently an agent for a crooked firm of "subscription publishers," and later a plain book agent. Then as tramp and hobo he explored a large section of the continent, winding up in the harvest fields of South Dakota, where certain injustices to floating labor caused him to go north, there to find what he sought in the soul of a people.

This is more than a narrative of adventure. It is a profoundly significant record of the attitude of the immigrant, more telling in its revelations of the inner mind and heart than of outward circumstances. After fifteen years' effort to find a publisher, this manuscript was withdrawn from circulation for a further period of seventeen years until the author reluctantly let friends take charge of it. This is unquestionably Canada's great book of the year.

The world at large thinks of Canada as a young country with a great future. Actually the first white settlement was attempted seventy-five years before Henry Hudson entered New York harbor, and fifty years before the first English colonists landed in Virginia. Whether or not the length of time and sparcity of population induced in Canadians a special veneration for the records of their country's past, the writing of histories has long been a flourishing industry. Though the mass of documents and commentaries is now of staggering proportions, there is no let-up in the output. The whole story has been written and rewritten; but Arthur P. Woollacott has brought some dead bones to life in his "Mackenzie and his Voyageurs."

Sir Alexander Mackenzie was one of the geniuses of the early fur-trade days, who combined the insatiable curiosity of the scientific mind with his hunt for pelts. Perhaps furs were a mere excuse for exploration. Anyway, he was no writer. The first white man to reach the Arctic Ocean by the river that now bears his name, and the first to reach the Pacific overland, his "Voyages from Montreal on the River St. Lawrence, through the Continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans, in the years 1789 and 1793," is a fairly dull book, frequently reprinted because packed with the most fascinating material. Woollacott has taken Mackenzie's facts, and got out of them the story that was in them, like extracting gold from quartz. His narrative is authentic and moving, containing none of the apocryphal or suppositious matter that often creeps into such efforts. He gets vividness and "human interest" solely by wise selection and good writing.

History also supplies the basis of two novels of merit. A. M. Stephen's "The Kingdom of the Sun" is a good story of adventure on the British Columbia coast in the time of Drake, one of whose captains is the hero of the tale. The occult lore of the Indians and the cruelty of the Haida and Salish tribes in their wars are used with effect.

In "Toward Sodom," a book in very different mood, B. Mabel Dunham continues from her "The Trail of the Conestoga" the story of the migration of Pennsylvania Mennonites to central Ontario just after the American War of Independence. It is a *genre* novel of pioneer conditions, of a kind familiar to American readers. These Dutch-German settlers, with their quaint Quakerish sobriety and rectitude, are portrayed sympathetically by one of their descendants. "Toward Sodom," the second volume, presents the younger generation, Canadian-born, beginning to fall for the world, the flesh and the devil, to the horror of their parents. Since the novel includes so much tribal history, Miss Dunham has no present intention of completing the trilogy by showing the twentieth century state of the community.

Tom MacInnes, who has spent considerable time in China, has produced a remarkable little book on the life and teachings of Lao Tze. This sage was a profounder philosopher than his contemporary Confucius, and the small book he left has generally been translated into gibberish. MacInnes is original and intelligent enough to render the Chinese text into colloquial English, and to couch his clear exposition of the doctrine in pithy and even, at times, humorous phrases. "The Teaching of the Old Boy" is therefore both refreshing and informative.

The vogue for things French-Canadian has called forth another volume of descriptive and interpretative essays in praise of the *habitants'* simple life. "Other Days Other Ways" by Georges Bouchard, which has just appeared in English after two French editions, celebrates the rustic joys and virtues of the peasantry of Quebec before urbanization had set in. A contented people is pictured with its interests dominated by the Church and otherwise limited to the home and the land. The book is on the general lines of the now firmly established "Chez Nous" of Justice Rivard; but is more sentimental in tone. Pentiful woodcut decorations by Edwin H. Holgate give it a distinguished appearance.

"Nelson's Historical Atlas of Canada," with extensive notes and chronological tables by Lawrence J. Burpee, includes 84 maps by Bartholomew and an encyclopædic amount of condensed information, besides a skeleton bibliography. This will prove valuable to students, and should find place in all reference libraries.

James H. Pedley's "Only This" relates the experiences of a Canadian officer in the Great War, and is perhaps the frankest document of the kind yet to appear. It glosses nothing of either the horrors or the follies, and may interest Americans who served in the C. E. F., as all persons are designated by their proper names.

"Many Minds" is a collection of quiet, penetrating, scholarly and humorous essays, mostly on classical subjects, by Maurice Hutton, one of the senior professors of Toronto University.

Mrs. May Lamberton Becker, editor of "The Reader's Guide," has gone abroad to be away until September 1. Her headquarters will be at 2 Bramerton St., Chelsea, London, but she will visit Berlin, Paris, Edinburgh, Vienna and Dublin. She will continue "The Reader's Guide" while abroad.

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On Picture Books

By VIRGINIA KIRKUS

Harper and Brothers

A FASCINATING world, the world of the picture book, and one that is hard to bound. There seems to be no evident "north, south, east and west" to it, and one begins to wonder "when is a picture book and why and how?" Must the term confine itself to books that started out to be picture books? Or is it fair to include a few,—please just a few,—of those books to read in which the pictures are so essential to one's thought of the books that without them they would scarcely *be* at all a perfect blend of pictures and text?

This is where the "why" of the picture book comes in. Pictures in a book are the bait by which the youngest of the family are enticed into the kingdom of books. One often ponders over the impossibility of determining which pictures will prove most appealing. There seems to be no innate sense of art—or is there,—beyond the ken of the grown-up? In any case, a few points prove themselves again and again. Little children like simplicity and flat color and scant perspective.

The Continentals have mastered a technique in the picture book which we seem slow to achieve. There is a boldness and a primitiveness in the work of German and Czechoslovakian and Austrian artists which American children instantly accept as their right. There is a crudity and a folk quality in the Russian art for children which appeals to the child who feels that here is something he can understand. There is a freshness and a simplicity and an exquisiteness in the use of the softer colors which makes the Scandinavian picture books (especially those of Elsa Beskow, whose picture books have a universal appeal, whether the text is understood or not) the envy of American book makers. Strangely, the French picture books, though they have the same delicacy of treatment and coloring as the Scandinavian, appeal less to the average child. Perhaps there is more self-consciousness—less natural humanity. We watched strayed children for an hour and more at the exhibition of foreign juvenile art almost two years ago in the Brooklyn Museum, and we marked with interest the absorption of the youngsters, even the tiniest ones, in the bold and simple technique, and again in the delicate and childlike fantasy, and their utter indifference to the elaborate beauty of the work of many artists whom adults are accustomed to think of as the epitome of illustration today. I refer particularly to the exquisite work of Arthur Rackham, of Dulac, of Kay Nielsen. Are they, perhaps, too intricate in design for the untrained child eye? Is there a grotesqueness in conception which fascinates the adult, but perplexes the child? Perhaps a brief survey of the picture books which have stood the acid test of time will give us the answer.

The picture book is a comparatively modern institution. It was well towards the end of the 19th century when the three best-known forerunners of the modern picture book gave a new turn to the much-neglected field of books for children. We think of them together, though they are singularly unlike in method:—Walter Crane, Randolph Caldecott, and Kate Greenaway. In Crane we find the inspiration of the Howard Pyle school of illustrating, perhaps, with his wealth of detail, his attention to decorative composition, his warmth of color. Caldecott had a story to tell. Therein lies his unfailing appeal. He saw action and pictures in every line of many of the old nursery rhymes, and immortalized them in graphic pictures. And Kate Greenaway gave glamour to the quaint charm of costume and setting, although she was not a truly great artist. And today, those three survive, of all that throng who lived and worked at the same time.

Of Sir John Tenniel—just a word. He is one who has immortalized himself through making his work an integral part of an immortal story. No illustrator of "Alice" since his day has taken his place, nor, we believe, ever will. His pictures, apart from the book, could tell the story and recreate the delicious humor. Here is one of the story books with illustrations that rightfully infringe on the province of the picture book pure and simple.

And Howard Pyle, too, has made his pictures an essential part of the text. He saw them as one—and created text and pictures almost together. He had an architectural sense about his books that has made them the models for illustrators every since.

Of the artists today, which can claim immortality? It is hard to say. But at least we can briefly skim the ones whose picture books seem for the moment to be essential in every child's library. There is William Nicholson, whose "Clever Bill" is one of the jolliest of its kind. There is the "A B C Book" by C. B. Falls. There are the unfailingly popular picture books by Tony Sarg. There is F. D. Bedford's "Magic Fishbone," and—more recently—his delightful edition of "The Cricket on the Hearth." There are the Darwins and the beloved "Mr. Tootleoo." And rapidly coming to the fore there is Lois Lenski with "Jack Horner's Pie," the most delightful of modern nursery rhyme books. And though he has made no picture books, one cannot neglect E. H. Shepard, whose drawings have given life and form to Christopher Robin. Nor must we forget C. Lovat Fraser. Nor Jessie Wilcox Smith. Nor E. Boyd Smith. And when this has gone, irretrievably, to press, we shall doubtless think of a dozen others. To them—and to all—we make our bow. If they have opened the world of books to children, they have done yeoman's service to literature.

A French Juvenile

PEAU-DE-PECHE. By GABRIEL MAURIERE. Paris: Librairie Gedalge. 1927.

Reviewed by AMELIA VON ENDE

IT would perhaps surprise those who join in the wholesale arraignment of French literature as risqué, spicy, and immoral, that on the French book market, as elsewhere, there have always been plenty of books, the reading of which would be far from corrupting the morals of their readers, books that could be placed in anybody's hands. It is probably with the view of emphasizing this fact that a French publisher recently started a series of such books that can be read with profit and pleasure by children and grown-ups alike. The "Collection Aurore" of the Librairie Gedalge contains reprints of older works like Tourgeniev's "Tales of a Hunter," Merimée's "Colomba," Baalzac's, "Pierrette," and Andersen's "Only a Fiddler," and not a few new publications, like Lily Jean-Laval's "Le Quenouille du Bonheur," crowned by the Academie, and Gabriel Maurière's "Peau-de-Pêche."

Teachers who in quest of French stories for younger readers have exhausted the school editions of French texts, among which are such delightful books as Jules Claretie's "Boum-Boum" and "Pierrille," Daudet's "Petit Chose," Loti's "Roman d'un Enfant," and France's "Petit Pierre," will find in "Peau-de-Pêche" a valuable addition to the reading material of their students. Like all the books mentioned above, it is a book of ethical import, but it does not underscore the moral which in scores of American juveniles and many foreign induced a little girl to exclaim before reaching the end of a certain story: "Oh, mademoiselle, let us skip that! That is the moral and it is always the same."

"Peau-de-Pêche" is a fine study of child psychology. It is told in the first person, simply, directly, with the naiveté of a child. Peau-de-Pêche, or Charlot, is an orphan living in a sordid suburban tenement of Paris with an aunt—so at least he had to call the woman, who had three or four other children like himself, occasionally visited by an officer of the Assistance Publique. It is the time of the war, and a child of eight or nine, said the aunt, was expected to be of some service: at least to beg some sous and promptly bring them to *la tante*. Charlot attends a school and is puzzled by the picture of the world which the teacher paints: a beautiful world, full of noble sentiments, "where one lived well, was happy, and gave to the poor to see them smile."

He keenly felt the contrast between his world and that other world. It became an obsession with him; he dreamed at home of the stories of charity, self-sacrifice, and heroism that he had heard, until a sound slap from the solid hand of the aunt awoke him. These were every-day incidents in his life. One day after such a harsh reminder of his uselessness, he went to a church to beg. There had been a wedding and carriage upon carriage was leaving. His eyes caressed the soft silk of a lady's dress; he stretched out his hand and mumbled "Un petit sou, madame!" and a silver coin dropped out of the furs. It bore a delicate perfume. He looked after the giver, when he perceived a leather wallet with gilt ornanments at his feet. He picked it up—it had the same perfume! He rushed after the carriage, until it stopped with the others before a sumptuous restaurant. He handed it to the lady as she stepped out, but she had to keep in line and told him to wait outside. The door closed, and seized with pride, he turned back without waiting for his reward, and ran home to give the coin to the aunt, who on hearing his story was enraged that he did not wait.

His adventure was circulated among janitors until it reached the waiters of the restaurant and eventually Mme. Desfleuves. One day her carriage stopped before the tenement, Charlot was called, and she took him with her to her home, the paradise, which he from now on frequently visited. But the aunt was furious that he only brought new clothes and no money from those visits, and one day called on Mme. Desflouves to tell her that they were not beggars. She returned with money and with a gold watch which she had stolen from madame's dresser. Charlot engaged in a fist fight with the termagant to recover the watch, and unable to do so, rushed out into the street. Not knowing whither to go, knowing only that his paradise was lost to him, he wound his way through the maze of taxis and busses—and the next morning awoke in a hospital.

All these simple events of a child of the slums are told with his comments, sometimes with the seriousness born of sad experience, sometimes with an innate naive humor. The reader follows his recovery in the hospital where red-cheeked Soeur Veronique makes him wish she was his mother, though he does not know exactly what a mother is like, until the day when she tells him that he is cured. He pales at the thought of returning to the Rue Charonne, but learns that he is to be sent to a real uncle of whose existence he had not known, Dupré, a farmer near Troyes. From now on the story deals with the development of a city gamin into a country lad. His ignorance of plants and animals on the farm as in the fields and woods furnishes many humorous episodes, but the narrative breathes throughout that love of the soil, faith in the regenerative qualities of good Mother Earth, and that deep insight into the soul of plain country folk that distinguished the author's earlier works, "Les Terriens," and the prize-crowned novel "A la Gloire de la Terre."

The war is all this time in the background of the story and the boy's reaction to it is interesting to note. The son of the Duprés is reported wounded in the hospital at Chalons and Charlot accompanies his aunt on his sad visit. They find him dead and buried, and on his return to the farm with the grief-stricken mother, the boy decides to try to fill the son's vacant place in the lives of the good people. The labors of the field, the friendship for a fellow-worker, and the awakening love for his cousin Lucie fill the following years of his life. As he follows the plough he listens to the roar of the cannon beyond the horizon, and what he had seen of the horrors of modern warfare at Chalons has made his a pacifist:

> Only the fathers and mothers of the country should have the right to declare war, when there is no other way out of it.

says he:

As Charlot's experience at Chalons was a landmark in his life, making the end of his childhood, so his military service marks the end of his adolescence. He returns a man, and his life resumes its course as a tiller of the soil. Peau-de-Pêche is endowed by the author with individual traits that make him an interesting character. Sturdy yet sensitive, modest yet proud, dreamer and worker, M. Maurière succeeded in welding apparently conflicting qualities into a harmonious personality. The other characters are less strongly individualized, but they are real human types. The book has a literary quality which raises it far above the average juvenile, foreign or American, and makes it fit to be read by anybody.

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The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

Architecture

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE OF TODAY. By *G. H. Edgell*. Scribners. $6.

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE. By *Fiske Kimball*. Bobbs-Merrill. $4.

Belles Lettres

ALL AT SEA. By *Osbert and Sacheverell Sitwell*. Doubleday, Doran. $2.50.

WORDS AND POETRY. By *George H. W. Rylands*. Payson & Clarke, Ltd. $3.

SOME MODERN POETS AND OTHER CRITICAL ESSAYS. By *Edward Davison*. Harper. $2.50.

ESSAYS OF TODAY. 1926-1927. Edited by *Odell Shepard* and *Robert Hillyer*. Century. $2.25.

Biography

WE HAVE CHANGED ALL THAT. By HERBERT QUICK and ELENA STEPANOFF MACMAHON. Indianapolis: The Bobbs Merrill Company. 1928. $2.

The story of Herbert Quick's last book is quite as interesting as the book itself. While a lieutenant colonel of the American army, at work in Vladivostok in 1920 liquidating the affairs of the Red Cross, he met a refugee from Kazan named Elena Stepanoff. A member of the wealthy gentry of Kazan, Miss Stepanoff had been driven from home in 1918 by the Bolsheviks. She lost her father and married an American officer of the engineering corps. Quartered in the American army barracks of Vladivostok, she was attracted by "a man of great height and extreme blondness," whose alertness, deep human understanding, and unquenchable youthfulness of spirit made him "a man of great personality." This was Herbert Quick. She told him her story; she wished to present it to the American public; and later in America he collaborated with her. "Each chapter traveled back and forth, through the mails, many times." Held back from publication that it might not interfere with his Iowa trilogy and his autobiography, it now sees the light—a brief, compact tale of two hundred and fifty pages.

The really significant portion of the book is its autobiographical element. The fictional additions simply make more readable the story of what Miss Stepanoff witnessed and endured when the Bolsheviki took charge at Kazan; when Commissar Loris installed himself in the ancient palace of the Governor-General, when the city was inundated by filth and violence, when the proudest bourgeois families were insulted and dispossessed. Miss Stepanoff describes the sack of a rich house:

> They came on like a pack of wolves. They were a mixed horde of many nationalities, of all ages, and with various passions and incentives. Sailors from Kronstadt, raging communists in navy blue shirts, and caps with flowing ribbons. Soldiers from Moscow, with untidy shirts and high boots. Some students, scarcely more than boys, fervently devoted to the revolution and its high aims, and regarding themselves as crusaders for liberty. Several Letts. Nondescripts, who talked broken Russian and wore civilian clothes of all sorts. All heavily armed.

Naturally the story is bitter; in fact, it spoils its effect by excessive bitterness. The pictures of successive Bolshevik officers who try to take advantage of the innocence and beauty of Mussia Krassin is hardly convincing. Yet there is sincerity behind the bitterness, and Miss Stepanoff knows her scene and her people. Herbert Quick's part in the book, it is safe to say, did not extend beyond a little advice regarding the plot—and the plot is very simple—and correction of the style. Essentially the volume is the work of the Russian refugee, and not of the far more gifted author of "Vandemark's Folly."

Fiction

CRUSADE. By DONN BYRNE. Boston: Little, Brown. 1928. $2.

Novelists often have a fierce dislike for their early successes. These triumphs are constantly thrown reproachfully back at them by a public that wants (or thinks it wants) a continuous repetition of what it first approved. In the case of Donn Byrne, "Messer Marco Polo" is the haunting ghost. Because "Blind Raftery" did not roll along with the entrancing cadences of the earlier tale, "Blind Raftery" apparently came near to breaking the hearts of the single-minded Byrne-ites. And now we have "Crusade," a spirited, colorful, brave romance of an Irishman in Damascus and Jerusalem in the days of the Templars. Already we can hear the cry, "It's not another 'Messer Marco Polo.'" Of course it's not. Why should it be? Donn Byrne wrote it; that fact assures us high narrative, glamorous and crowded. If he should ever recapture the inspiration of his fairy tale of young Polo, we should all be, of course, immensely happy. Perhaps some day he will. But meanwhile "Crusade" is not be deprecated.

Sir Miles O'Neill is the protagonist. We follow his disgust with the Ireland that was being sobered by the Norman infiltration; his desperate espousal of the Crusade as an escape from boredom; his almost fatal battle with the enemies of the Cross, his capture by a well-disposed band of Arabs, and his convalescence in a friendly home in Damascus. There he finds an Arab girl whom he loves according to the best romantic tradition. Later at Jerusalem he helps to guard the Holy Sepulchre, gets into trouble with the Templars, and finally has to flee—with the maiden Kothra. The fable is pleasant, indeed, and one that gives Donn Byrne full scope for his specialties—warm local color, picturesque character, and lusty detail of physical combat. If he occasionally overdoes these specialties it is through an excess of zeal. Few writers have his energies or his sense for the dramatically effective massing of material. "Crusade" is credible and persuasive throughout, and if it is in places too highly documented to be easily readable, we forgive the fault almost at the instant of its commission.

LOVE IN CHARTRES. By NATHAN ASCH. A. & C. Boni. 1927. $2.50.

It is a bold man who writes of Chartres after Henry Adams. Particularly bold is he who tries to carry the cathedral into a contemporary love story written in a style which is a mingling of Modern Staccato, Gertrude Stein, and Hiawatha. Perhaps it is a sense of the difficulties piled up before Nathan Asch that has occasioned the extravagant praise bestowed in some quarters upon his "Love in Chartres." He does occasionally create a magical atmosphere of blue stained-glass through which we see his lovers moving palely for their moment; and these lovers nameless, distant, generic, do achieve at times a certain poignancy. In the long run, however, both they and their transient *amour* prove pointless. And Chartres Cathedral remains a mountainous obstruction. It is far too great, garmented far too richly in its own traditions, to consent to serve as background for two creatures no more significant than these. In the end Mr. Asch's attempt reminds one unpleasantly of the familiar kodak of Jim and Susan photographed in front of the Pyramids, Kenilworth Castle, or St. Peter's. For the rest, there are some curious inaccuracies in the setting. Mr. Asch sacriligiously and incorrectly refers to the Ass of Chartres as "a donkey whose braying head time had removed." His heroine goes to sleep on the train and is aroused by the "conductor's" pulling her sleeve and muttering "Chartres." Where in all Europe did Mr. Asch pick up that obliging "conductor"?

THE IMAGE IN THE PATH. By GRENVILLE VERNON. Dial. 1927. $2.50.

Strangely shifting moods, times, and personalities are the materials Grenville Vernon works with in "The Image in the Path." Mr. Vernon writes well—his musical and theatrical criticisms have already shown that—but in this novel he writes too much. It carries incidents and conversations on beyond the interest of the reader; yet the succeeding incident or conversation will call him back again, and for the most part the writing itself will carry him on. The opening chapter gives the key to the book. An American has returned in middle age to the Paris of his youth. He sits in the soft May evening under the chestnut blossoms. That other May the strains of a waltz drifted towards him—now jazz assaults his ears. He finds great differences in the surroundings. Then a lady of the Promenade accosted him and led him to romance—now a lady of the Promenade accosts him and he leaves. He finds great differences in himself. The story tightens quickly to drama when he comes to his old love and her daughter, who, partly through

(*Continued on next page*)

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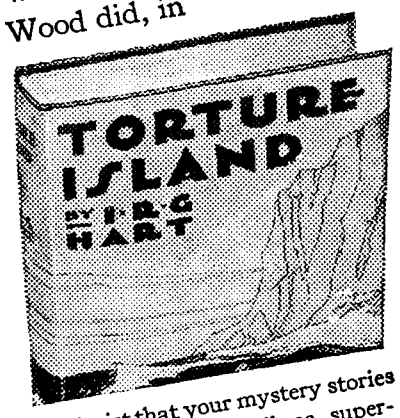

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Yours truly
R. E. Phillips

The Wits' Weekly

Competition No. 30. A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the best brief inscription, preferably, but not necessarily, in verse, for a Memorial to President Wilson at Geneva. (Entries should reach *The Saturday Review* office not later than the morning of May 14.)

Competition No. 31. A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the best Elegy on the Old Back Bay Station (recently burned) at Boston. (Entries should reach *The Saturday Review* office not later than the morning of May 21.)

Competitors are advised to read carefully the rules printed below.

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH COMPETITION

The prize of fifteen dollars which was offered for the best fragment from an "Ode to Freud" has been equally divided between R. D. Lucas, of Richmond, Va., and Homer M. Parsons, of San Bernardino, Cal.

THE WINNING ODES

I. By R. D. LUCAS

Great Freud,
Fell plumber of the mind's remote recesses,
Greatly annoyed,
Thy warm admirer nervously confesses,
Something has choked the drain
Of his poor brain.

Complexes batten in the muck
That's backing up and floods the bottom—
You know I've got 'em!
You know
There is no exit for my libido.
I'm out of luck!

Behold, this morn a peeving problem faced me:
Last night I dreamed
And thus it seemed:
While dire anxiety neuroses chased me,
I strove amid the chaos of the traffic
Only to find the Mirror, News and Graphic
Were all sold out!
I gave an angry shout
And came to with a scream.
But that's no idle dream!

Needless to mention,
I'm needing psychoanalytical attention.
Writhing and hissing in the mental mire,
The sex-crazed serpent of suppressed desire,
By its mere presence there, confirms
My need of some sure cure for psychic worms.

Unconscious quite I was inclined
To be of my unconscious mind,
But now a mystic,
Masochistic,
Terrible Tabloid
Complex I have, friend Freud!

Come, come, don't bluff;
Proceed to show thy stuff;
My sore suppressions sublimate,
And lustily will I applaud!
But if my complex thou dost complicate,
Then will I dub thee Fraud.

II. By HOMER M. PARSONS

Sigmund! What ebon ignorance was mine
Ere thy resplendent psychologic sun
Shattered the complex darkness into fine
And feathery gray mist: I walked as one
Whose childhood wore no pornographic text
Emblazoned on its raiment;
My soul (parDON, the Censor!) ne'er was vexed
That what I meant to say meant Quite other.
Unblushing, I drew circles in the sand,
And dreamt of locks to which I held the key,
Or wings whereon I soared in ecstasy.
Benighted youth!—I loved my father and
Disdained my mother.
Then camest thou—
And how!
Oh, what a line of lingo hast thou slung!
Oh, with what precious morsels fed up us:
Double entendre, amnesia, slips of tongue,
Legends of Moses, Sappho, Oedipus!
Clashing the phallic symbols for the dance
Till everything that hath protuberance
(Or else, in some degree, Concavity)
Joined in the orgy—cosmic widdershins!

* * * * * * *

(Learning the utter depravity of his subconscious, he decides to "be himself" hereafter, and lead a glorious future life.)

** * Free! Free at last! Oh, freest of the free!*
I sing a loud Magnificat to thee,
O psychoanalytic guide!
My vilest crime by no remorse is haunted,
And yet I muse: Incest and patricide
Brought blue-clad buzzards swooping. Nothing daunted,
"Avaunt!" I cried. Oh, would they had avaunted!

Plunged into darkness in my prison cell,
I wait the noose that shall catch up the stars
And hurl them with me down the depths of hell,
Cleaving the night like blazing scimitars.
And when the fiery constellations fade
Beyond the smoke that shrouds the murky pit,
Mayest thou murmur, "Hell to pay is paid;
All of his future now is preterit."

All but half-a-dozen of this week's competitors offered variations on the unfriendly theme, "I do not love thee, Doctor Freud." But even if I had been hoping for an ode in praise of psycho-analysis, which I was not, the prize could scarcely have gone to one of the Doctor's champions. Isabella Hess was the doughtiest of these. Though her fragment was perhaps a little too expository it worked up to a fitting climax with—

'Tis true the unlettered populace doth smile,
And idly chatter, scoffing loud the while!
But from thy psycho-analytic height
Thou calmly look'st, and sayest "I am right!
The things that mankind either bless or vex
Are caused and dominated by the sole force, Sex!"

Another competitor distinguished himself by discovering a rhyme for a hitherto unrhymable word, "amongst."

Read, therefore, these weak words in praise of one
Who has distinction pure and unalloyed,
Of opening all man's secrets to the sun—
I mean no other than Herr Doctor Freud.

We learn from him of mighty Libido,
And that fear-raising German guttural, Angst;
They grin and beckon us where'er we go
Regardless of fair scenes we move amongst.

But this was scarcely an ode.

The antagonistic odes won all the honors. H. H. De Long did not fulfill his promising beginning.

Would, psychotherapeutist, that this ode
Could, in some way repay the debt that's owed
To you by we poor educational kleptomaniacs
Who do, in many conversational acrobatic acts,
Employ your phraseology
To teach some new theology.

Laura Emily Mau wrote what was, in effect, an ode in praise of Adler who, she holds, has "forever banished libido." Parker Tyler, in a footnote, pointed out that "by the blended systems of alliteration, rhyme, allegory, and hidden words this poem contains a sexual symbolism." I have thought it best not to share my enjoyment of his effort with the readers of this page. Kate T. Sharber began with "Freud, we introverts salute you"—

Tedium's topless towers sink low
When we get you on libido. . . . .
Snakes and cigarettes are symbols,
If our dreams be reviewed. . . . .
B o a t s? Staircases? Hammocks? Thimbles?
Wishes. (Or memory re-nude!). . . .
For all our boast of Will so free
You've taught us all is phallicy!

James T. Foster, Thomas M. McDade and Stella Fisher Burgess also deserve honorable mention, the last especially for the frank expression of what I take to be the feelings of thousands of not unintelligent people who, from the first, refused to swallow Freud whole.

Stern prober of the dreams of men,
O Freud, I envy not your fame.
What would we give to know again
The days when no-one breathed your name?
Those good old days when there could be
An impulse sprung from decency,
Not all one's motives were obscene,
A few were generous, some were clean;
Not every soul one chanced to meet
Preferred the gutter to the street,
And men at times were known to act
From Chivalry. . . . .

But R. D. Lucas and Homer M. Parsons stood head and shoulders above all these. I find it quite impossible to like one ode more than the other and the prize is therefore divided equally between them.

RULES

(Competitors failing to comply with rules will be disqualified.)

1. Envelopes should be addressed to "The Competition Editor, *The Saturday Review of Literature*, 25 West 45th Street, New York City." The number of the competition (e.g., "Competition 1") must be written on the top left-hand corner. 2. ALL MSS. must be legible—typewritten if possible—and should bear the name or pseudonym of the author. Competitors may offer more than one entry. MSS. cannot be returned. 3. *The Saturday Review* reserves the right to print the whole or part of any entry.

The New Books

Fiction

(*Continued from preceding page*)

her likeness to her mother and partly through her difference from her, becomes for him a sinister necessity. This daughter, "Elodie," is a queerly vivid character who descends constantly to theatricalism and yet, perhaps because the author shares the hero's attitude towards her, forces her ruthless individuality upon the reader. Mr. Vernon has very subtly handled the fluctuations of feeling between mother, daughter, and lover. He is at his best on the psychological plane; when he writes of events there is a decided suggestion of manipulation.

UNCERTAIN TREASURE. By HELEN WOODBURY. Little, Brown. 1928. $2.

There is nothing good to report about "Uncertain Treasure." Helen Woodbury has succeeded in writing a wholly conventional novel in which dullness and mediocrity vie with each other in making her pages almost unreadable. The narrative concerns a married couple who love—then hate—and, on the last page, love once more. It is all very dreary.

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The Reader's Guide

CONDUCTED BY MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, c/o *The Saturday Review*. Mrs. Becker's summer headquarters will be at 2 Bramerton St., Chelsea, London.

M. H., Springfield, Ill., is planning for a club a study course to cover two years of work in fifty papers given by the twenty-five women who make up its membership. The subject is "The Nineteenth Century," and most of the membership emerged from it. M. H. believes that we are now far enough away from the gulf of the war that closed this epoch to consider it as a whole, tracing the lines of its development.

TAKING the century as comprised between Waterloo and the World War, this club could take its stand on the new two-volume revised edition of the popular standby, "Europe Since 1815," by Charles Downer Hazen (Holt). The importance of this work in leading general readers to consider nations as interacting one upon another can hardly be appreciated by one not brought up under the former school practice of polishing off each country one by one, as if each were a special and self-sufficient act of creation. What the "Outline" did later for everyone who could read, the first version of "Europe Since 1915" did for those who read it. Keep close at hand the two volumes of Robinson and Beard's "Development of Modern Europe" (Ginn), and "Readings in Modern European History." The advantage of club study over individual home reading—where it has any—is that genuine students may pool their resources and accomplish, working together, what for one reason or another no one of them could do separately. So, see that there are several reliable and well-written world histories for this period at the disposal of the group: J. S. Schapiro's "Modern and Contemporary European History" (Houghton), Ferdinand Schevill's "History of Europe from the Reformation to the Present Day" (Harcourt), E. R. Turner's "Europe Since 1789" (Doubleday), and Gooch's "History of Modern Europe" (Holt), which I find especially useful for untangling matters of diplomacy that newspaper editors often take for granted the reader knows all about, when all he knows is how the word sounds.

After being for some time out of print, the important work of Max von Boehn, "Modes and Manners of the Nineteenth Century," is again accessible (Dutton, four volumes, each volume $5). This is altogether charming—at least to anyone who likes to brood over dead fashions, as in the pages of Godey. The vast number of pictures are some from the fashion magazines of Paris, London, Vienna and Hamburg: some are caricatures of a period whose caricature is invaluable as documentation: some are from paintings by men like Romney or Goya. Many of these are in color.

The costumes of the nineteenth century are discussed, among others, in Frank Alvah Parson's "Psychology of Dress" (Doubleday). I would document this department of the subject more carefully than it may have occurred to the program committee of a literary club to do: this was an era when clothes were taken seriously. I have just been re-reading a large part of the "Comédie Humaine," spurred thereto by the appearance in Little Brown's "Beacon Library of Fiction Masterpieces" of a two-dollar edition of "Cousine Bette," and the upholstery of the ladies, how important, how elaborately described, it is! and how much it tells about the upholstery of the time!

If I were making a course like this I would not neglect the approach by way of biography. History is made out of many biographies and if one could get from the lives of all the great men of a period each a ray of light, the converging rays would furnish a tremendous illumination. This group reading is propitious for this method; it would be possible to light up the Nineteenth Century through many twentieth century biographies besides those written in the period; Sandburg's "Abraham Lincoln: the Prairie Years" (Harcourt), for instance, with one of the Lincoln lives written before 1914. Indeed, a source of special interest would be the reviewing of contemporary and later biographies together—this would give added flavor to Strachey's "Queen Victoria" and lives of other Victorians that have strung along after this volume. Such a comparative list would be too long for this space, but as this is a woman's club, I cannot leave unnoticed the new lives of Mrs. Carlyle, the delightful volume called "Jane Welsh and Jane Carlyle," by Elizabeth Drew (Harcourt), and the one promised by the Viking Press, "Jane Walsh Carlyle," by Willa Muir. This latter volume is one of the series called "Representative Women" (Viking), unconventional and most interesting studies that should be welcomed by program committees; I am asked every year for books about celebrated women for such organizations. The one on Annie Besant, by Geoffrey West, certainly belongs in the Nineteenth Century, though it is about a living woman—a book that is a model for treatment of a living subject. "The Brontë Sisters," by Ernest Dimnet (Harcourt), has just been translated: those who have been urging their friends to read in French the best biography of the tragic three, may now tell them that it has thus been made easy for the English reader. From Stokes is soon to come "Susan B. Anthony," which I am glad to see is by Rheta Childe Dorr, who in temperament, training and experience is fitted to give a just and appreciative account of her part in history. Honoré Willsie Morrow has lately made an effort to correct some of the misapprehensions concerning the wife of Lincoln; her "Mary Todd Lincoln, an Appreciation" is published by Morrow, and there have been various magazine articles on this line, including one by Ida Tarbell.

I wish "Mr. Punch's History of Modern Europe" were in print (Stokes): but if it is in your library, follow the text as well as the pictures, the latter being from the files of this social stabilizer.

* *

THE correspondent who asked some weeks since for books about the Basque country is informed that Eleanor Elsner has written one of the most attractive of recent travel books, called "The Romance of the Basque Country and the Pyrenees" (Century). This begins at Biarritz and San Sebastian, but goes through the Basque Provinces, the Pyrenees, Pau, Lourdes, Toulouse, Foix, and Carcassonne, with a pleasant mingling of legend, history, and practical suggestions to motorists and travellers in general. The pictures are excellent. The hurried reader of book-jackets might have thought that another volume had been added to this literature and by no less an art authority than Sacheverell Sitwell, for on the tan-colored wrapper of his "All Summer in a Day" (Doran) appeared the statement that he was author of "Southern *Basque* Art"; this, however, was modified on the title page by making him the author of "Southern *Baroque* Art." This is a mournful comfort to me, whose own agonies with types have proved that troubles of this sort seldom come singly.

* *

THE correspondent who wished for handbooks on mineralogy for the information of schoolchildren and others in "the glorified rockpile that is Arizona" is informed that besides the "Field Book of North American Minerals" (Putnam), there is now a new and enlarged edition of L. J. Spender's "The World's Minerals" (Stokes), with appendix by W. D. Hamman, and 163 illustrations accurately colored. It describes fully 116 of the more common simple minerals, and others are described more briefly. It is not too complicated for schoolchildren's reference use, but is not in anything like "story-form."

* *

PROF. WM. F. LUEBKE, University of Denver, adds two more titles to fortify this department's reputation for scholarship in the matter of polyglot dictionaries, as set forth on April 7:

Eberhard, "Synonymisches Handwoerterbuch der Deutschen Sprache," 15th edition, Leipzig; Grieben's Verlag, 1896, 1011 pp. (This gives synonyms of the German words in English, Russian, French and Italian. It has complete indexes for each of the foreign languages and costs about $4.50)

"The Six-Language Dictionary," Lisbon, 1902, $6. (French, German, English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese.)

He adds that Prof. Carl Darling Buck of the University of Chicago is working on a dictionary of "Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages; a Contribution to the History of Ideas."

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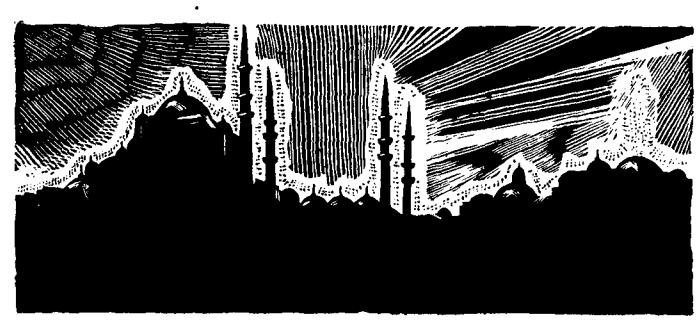

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MEN have gone to the stake for printing statements no more upsetting to the conventional opinions of scholastic authorities than are some of the radicalisms in E. Ph. Goldschmidt's "Gothic and Renaissance Bookbindings." Perhaps the most disturbing of all his original ideas is the suggestion that the fact that Sir Ernest Benn's name appears on the binding of these two stately volumes does not prove that they were bound by Sir Ernest in person, nor even that he is the owner of a book-binding establishment—and, moreover, that identical evidence proves just as little on the fifteenth century binding. This is both reasonable and sensible, but it knocks the bottom out from under pretty nearly everything that has passed heretofore as scientific bibliographical study of early printing.

Mr. Goldschmidt's two volumes, one of text and the other of plates, modestly profess to be merely a catalogue of the author's collection of book bindings. But, being a bookseller as well as an ardent collector in his chosen line, he has enjoyed exceptional opportunities; and having scholarly instincts into the bargain, he has worked through the libraries and the principal private collections as well, in search of evidence bearing on his theories. The result is a work which runs a close second to McKerrow's "Introduction to Bibliography" as the most important bookish book of the present season. The two together make it fairly certain that all students in these lines must take a fresh start.

THE John Barnard Associates, which is the name of a college book club and not one of the new-style book shops, are trying an innovation in marketing their first publication. Instead of making a limited edition and restricting it to their members, they are offering it for sale to anybody who wishes to order it in advance of going to press. Nothing is said about the size of the edition, but there is a plain intimation, in the previous practice of the Associates, that they will not feel any obligation to look after the interests of collectors who wait to see the book before buying it.

This John Barnard book is being issued to commemorate the centenary of the birth of Charles Eliot Norton, and will contain two of Norton's earliest pieces of writing, together with an introduction by Professor Kenneth B. Murdock. These all have to do with Walt Whitman, and the volume should have a certain importance as throwing some light on the question of the attitude of the Harvard group toward Whitman, when "Leaves of Grass" first appeared. Norton was asked to review the "Leaves," and it made such an impression on him that he wrote a poem himself, in Whitman's style. This is now printed for the first time. The book is being produced at the Harvard University Press, which acts as agent for the Associates in promising to fill orders received before May 15.

THE Library of Congress has issued from the Government Printing Office a catalogue of a loan collection of Incunabula selected from the private library of Dr. Otto H. F. Vollbehr of Berlin. It is a compact list of 116 titles, but these begin with a Chinese book of 1405, and end with the Gutenberg Bible. The latter is represented by a facsimile, Dr. Vollbehr's matchless copy of the original being still in Europe. The Chinese block book is apparently a recent addition to his library, for it has not been shown in previous exhibitions. It is an "Exhortation to Virtue, compiled by command of the Empress Jen Hsiao of the Ming Dynasty," as of March 9, 1405.

The Vollbehr collection has inspired two other recent booklets. One is "An Authentic Story of the Choicest Book of Christendom told anew by Edwin Emerson" and issued from the Tudor Press in New York. This is an account of Dr. Vollbehr's copy of the Gutenberg Bible on vellum, illustrated by a number of cuts, of which the portrait of Dr. Vollbehr himself will be particularly welcome to many who have met him in connection with the exhibitions of his treasures. Another reproduces a "Posthumous Portrait of Johannes Gutenberg by an Unknown Rhenish Artist, now in the possession of Mr. Gustav Zeese at Great Neck, Long Island." The term "posthumous" seems to have been well chosen, as the reproduction appears to be identical with a picture printed not long ago in the New York *Times* as "A Portrait of Johann Gutenberg by an Unknown Artist, Painted about the middle of the Eighteenth Century, Recently Presently to the Library of Congress by Gabriel Wells of New York."

The other publication is an essay on the value of incunabula for scholars, "Inkunabelsammlungen und ihr wissenschaftlicher Wert," with special reference to books in the Vollbehr collection. This essay, written by Dr. Ernst Schulz, was privately printed at Munich last summer, and is now translated by Dr. Powell Spring, who has had it printed at the William E. Rudge press at Mount Vernon, N. Y. Dr. Pierce Butler of the Newberry Library in Chicago contributes a brief introduction.

IF one wishes to own as well as to look at "Fifteeners," there is no safer adviser as to what to buy than Lathrop C. Harper of No. 8 West Fortieth Street. The second part of his "Selection" of books from 160 early presses is introduced by Lawrence C. Wroth of the John Carter Brown Library, who pays a tribute to the bookseller which will be shared by all who have had dealings with him. "Mr. Harper is a bookseller who collects, not for himself indeed, but for his patrons. He buys nothing that he would not care to own himself; a book must interest him or he passes it by. And so, though there are a great number of books in this cataolgue at moderate prices, each of them has something about it that has caught his interest—condition, unusual contents, a little known press or an interesting binding or association."

TO those whose memories go back to the Great Ones of a previous century, there is something pathetic about some of the prices in a short list of American items issued by Stanley O. Bezanson of the Ames Building in Boston. A page and a half in T. B. Aldrich's handwriting, addressed to E. C. Stedman, can be had for $3.00, while Stedman himself goes at fifty cents more, but there is a copy of his "Poets of America" thrown in. Josiah Quincy is worth the same as Stedman, but with nothing to boot, while Ralph Waldo Emerson seems almost prohibitive at $12. Eight Connecticut Governors can be had all for $10, while a Signer of the Declaration of Independence, George Clymer, on "a small printed document," is worth $7.50. Another Signer, Thomas Heyward, Jr., on a Sheriff's Writ of 1785, rises to $22.50.

RALPH ALLAN of the Phoenix Book Shop at 41 East 49th Street dwells on quite another level. He asks $2,250 for part of a set, 29 out of 58 numbers, of a secondary school paper, while a thin little volume of schoolboy lyrics is put at $3,000. These are the first two items in a catalogue of 133 Kipling items, which is a good index of current values. The best bargain in the catalogue is probably a file of 30 issues, claiming to be complete, of "The Friend," published at Bloemfontein from March 15 to April 18, 1900, at $2,000.

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But whether you want something to read with a pleasant click of mental machinery, or whether you want a good substitute for the movies on a rainy evening, there's something to your taste in this list.

First--underline, please —REEDS AND MUD, by Blasco Ibanez, the Dutton Book of the Month for April.

Here is an unconventional love story--a rugged novel of man's battle for a livelihood in a marshy island off the coast of Spain. It tells of the men who work all day on the fishing-grounds; of the innkeeper's lovely wife, and her lover, the soldier home from the war in Cuba.

Next. MANNERS, by Helen Hathaway--a book that concerns itself not so much with How to Act When You Meet the Ambassador as with everyday things that make your contacts with other people easier and pleasanter--things like courtesy over the telephone, how to put a guest at ease.

Next (biography this time), MUSSOLINI, THE MAN OF DESTINY, by Vittorio de Fiori--the story of the man, not the statesman. It is written by a man who all his life has known Il Duce well; so that the hot-tempered youngster, the exiled bricklayer, the journalist finally the first of all Fascists, here are shown with a fascinating intimacy.

Then there is SHORN, by Robert L. Grant, the man who wrote "Vanneck."

Breathes there a man who would not go
To fight with bulls in Mexico,
Meet thugs and love an English goil,
Make millions over night in oil?
He should not ought to of been born
Who does not like Grant's novel, SHORN.

And there's HAPPINESS, a genial little essay by William Lyon Phelps.

Here is a book free from all unintelligent sentimentality. Inner Standards of Happiness--How Happy is Youth?--How Good is Money?--these are a few of the points Professor Phelps discusses.

Or again, Broadway and barnstorming, the Hoop-skirt Age and the Hip-flask Era, all the color and dust and change of the stage and the road--these are set forth in CLOWNING THROUGH LIFE, Eddie Foy's living record of his long theatrical career.

And, last of all, there's THE VOICE OF SEVEN SPARROWS, by Harry Stephen Keeler. This is a Detective Story with All the Modern Improvements--involving murder on an island, a message in Chinese on a deuce of spades, newspaper intrigue, lifeboats, embezzlement, an almond-eyed villain of surpassing wickedness. Simply swell!

And a stunning daughter of the idle rich of course.

All of these books won't please all of the people all of the time. That would be too utterly stupid.

But there's a book in the list for every taste, and a book for every mood.

Points of View

"Vasco"

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*

SIR:

We shall be glad if you will, and I am sure you will want to, take an early opportunity of mentioning in the *Saturday Review* that a translation by the indefatigable Eric Sutton of Marc Chadourne's novel, "VASCO," reviewed on page 743 of the issue of April 7, will be published by Harcourt, Brace & Co. early in the fall.

MONTGOMERY BELGION.

Poetry and Prose

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

SIR:

On April 14th, 1928, you published an interesting article by Mr. Herbert Read entitled *Is it Prose or Poetry?* Mr. Read in thirty-nine brisk lines resolves a problem which has plagued a century, and has leisure in the same short article for other topics. "Poetry," he says, "is the expression of one form of mental activity, prose the expression of another form." That is, the difference lies in the matter to be expressed. He proceeds instantly: "Poetry is creative expression; prose is constructive expression." That is, the difference lies in the *mode* of expression. Already he has shifted his ground.

"In poetry," he goes on, "the words are born or reborn in the act of thinking." Words, if born, must have a parent. What parent? The thought? The parent and child, then, are born at the same moment.

In poetry "there is no time interval between the words and the thought." In prose, however, the "materials" (or thoughts) precede the words. I could believe without much hardship that words always came first, or that thoughts always came first, or that words and thoughts always entered the mind together. But it is hard for me to believe—without evidence—that the appearance of words and thoughts is sometimes (in poetry) simultaneous, and sometimes (in prose) consecutive. The relation between thought and speech, whatever it may be, seems so much older and more basic than the distinction between poetry and prose.

Let us glance at the reader's psychology, —a topic untouched by Mr. Read. When Mr. Read himself takes the words "a peak in Darien" from a page, does he not receive the words first, and, even if he hardily insists that words and thought enter his mind abreast, does not exactly the same thing happen when he finds the phrase "Isthmus of Panama" in a prose column of his morning newspaper? If that be so, what becomes of the distinction between poetry and prose?

Mr. Read goes on: "The thought is the word and the word is thought, and both the thought and the word are poetry." Let us see. Disraeli was Beaconsfield and Beaconsfield was Disraeli, and *both* were Jews. Is that a logical expression? Is it not an exact parallel to Mr. Read's?

I agree with the animus and direction of Mr. Read's thesis,—that is, I believe that the difference between prose and poetry lies in the greater intimacy between the thought and the language in the latter. I should quite willingly say that prose was the conjunction of thought and language, poetry their coalition. These things I should call, not definitions, but phrases, and Mr. Read's part seems to me little more than the contribution of other and more disputable phrases. Around a truth which few thinkers would contest he has cast a *cloak* of metaphysics,—a cloak which is not a *shield*.

O. W. FIRKINS.

University of Minnesota.

Mr. Pearson Replies

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*

SIR:

The reference to Roger Casement, which I made in an article, which annoyed Mr. Shaemas O'Sheel, was in these words: "the traitor Casement, whom it is the fashion, in some quarters, to admire."

As some of your readers may be unaware of what Casement did, and as there is now a widespread endeavor to whitewash all that was done from 1914 to 1918, by Germany and her friends, I beg leave to reply to part of Mr. O'Sheel's letter.

There is no possible comparison, as Mr. O'Sheel implies that there is, between the cause of Germany *versus* Great Britain in 1916 and America *versus* Great Britain in 1775. One who helped Germany in 1916, as Roger Casement did, was helping to destroy Belgium and France. With his characteristic shiftiness, Casement, at his trial, asserted that his activities, which were supervised and directed by the German Government, were not to aid Germany, but only Ireland. It is this cowardly sophistry which makes especially inappropriate Mr. O'Sheel's comparison of Casement with Washington and Franklin.

Mr. O'Sheel asks if there is any difference in the quality of the acts committed by Washington and by Casement. The answer is that there is almost as much difference as between the acts of General Robert E. Lee and of John Wilkes Booth.

* *

As late as 1911, although the quarrel between Ireland and Britain was then old, this so-called Irish patriot had not declared himself. Britain was at peace, and strong, and Casement was writing to Sir Edward Grey, and in language particularly obsequious, begging the British Cabinet Minister to convey to his Majesty the King (the courtier's language is Casement's) his most humble thanks for the great honor of knighthood which had been conferred upon him.

In 1914, when Britain was beset by enemies, and in sore trouble, this "patriot" turns up in Germany, making speeches to Irish soldiers in the prison camps, and trying to cause them to be false to their soldiers' oaths of allegiance to Britain, and to join some mysterious Irish Legion. In other words, trying to lead humbler and more ignorant men than himself into treason and its penalties. All of this directed by the Germans. Does any reasonable person see in this anything which reminds him of George Washington?

Mr. O'Sheel is quite at liberty to go on inventing comic epithets to describe the size of my soul. But it would be decent of him to leave Washington and Franklin out of the discussion when he is talking about Roger Casement.

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His first full length novel in a decade, Therese, *will be published this Summer by* The Inner Sanctum

NEXT SPOTLIGHT: WILL DURANT

No new books from *The Inner Sanctum* will be forthcoming now until May 25th, but on that day we shall make up for the strange interlude by releasing three works

Hearst, an American Phenomenon, by JOHN K. WINKLER
What'll We Do Now? by LONGSTRETH AND HOLTON
Arnold Levenberg, Man of Peace, by DAVID PINSKI

Two of these three will be genuinely works of major importance, but it will cost money to discover which two they are.

Meantime *The Inner Sanctum* is still regaling its friends with raptures over *The Three Cornered Hat*, a new translation by MARTIN ARMSTRONG of the Spanish classic by DON PEDRO ANTONIO DE ALARCON.

Large raptures, distinguished critical acclaim, but small sales—in all candor and humility *The Inner Sanctum* believes the reading public is wrong in failing to make *The Three Cornered Hat* a best seller.

In last month's issue of *Book-of-the-Month Club News*, edited by HARRY SCHERMAN, *The Inner Sanctum* noted some true talk on an ever fascinating subject—"*what the public wants.*"

"There are, in fact, says MR. SCHERMAN, "a hundred 'publics,' each one with a hundred changing intellectual appetites. It is the same public—largely without doubt the same readers—who bought *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* and *The Story of Philosophy* in hundred-thousand quantities . . ."

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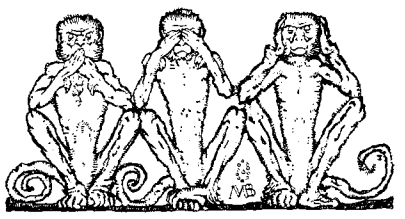


SHOP TALK

Now that Mr. Tunney, world's heavyweight boxing champion, has delivered a lecture on Shakespeare to the seniors and juniors at Yale, literature will no doubt become a popular subject and the bookshop will take the place of the corner lot in the life of Young America. In no time at all there will be no need for those of us who strive earnestly to interest a few more people in the game of ***Bookshopping***. The man who aspires to the position of leader in thought will have to get a reputation as an expert at something more athletic than stud poker. "Who did he lick?" will be the query of the youth of tomorrow before he sits at the feet of the new D. Lit's.

Frankly, we are of the opinion that it doesn't particularly matter who points the path to the bookstore so long as it is clearly marked with the necessary finger-posts. If the people of Pittsburgh will troop to the A. B. A. stores there, Joseph Horne's, Johes', Kaufmann's, Guthrie's, Weldin's, Hays', the University of Pittsburgh, and the Methodist and Presbyterian Book Concerns, because Grantham of the Pirates recommends G. B. S., Scott or Baudelaire, there will be a lot of folks in the cheering section. So long as the object is worthy we are rather indifferent to the method of attainment. As the readers of the *Saturday Review* well know, once the *Bookshopping* habit has been formed it is not going to be lost in a hurry. And, as it is a good habit, every means whereby it can be given to more people ought to be utilized.

There are many of us who believe that no one is too young to be spared. Youth idealizes physical accomplishment and we therefore invite all prize fight, tennis, swimming and track champions to lecture on the subject "Reading Made Me What I Am." Are there any acceptances?

Ellis Ames Ballard

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

American Booksellers Association

THE clip-sheet is a great institution, but the technique of clip-sheet writing is not invariably artful. Take, for instance,—we are going to give a brief lecture on this matter,—a "Literary Note" before us. We shall not give away the publisher. It says in part:

So-and-So and So-and-So, "Two hundred and thirty pages about (this and that and the other country) are described in this book, and—something new—the sixteen fictional stories, whose scenes are each laid in its appropriate setting."

The person who wrote that simply must study syntax,—he or she will find it fascinating, and bring to it a virgin mind. Also, a story is a story. It is either a true story or it is fiction. "Fictional" is a monstrous word,—egad, sir, monstrous! . . . .

The same publisher brings out a book entitled "Whimsical Whimsies." Now really! A "whimsey," God save the mark, is bad enough. But a whimsical whimsey is just too tautologically tickling. The author should have been prevented from using this title, if necessary, by the police force. Titles are important to publishers. Why don't more of them use more brainwork on their titles? . . .

From the Broadside of the *American Mercury* we learn that *Harold Bell Wright* told *Jim Tully* that he would never be a writer, when Jim took "Emmett Lawler" to Harold for advice upon it. Well, we did worse. We read "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" in manuscript and gave a private opinion that, fine as it was, it wouldn't sell over five thousand. But why do we needlessly give ourselves away? Just because we always needlessly give ourselves (that should really, we suppose, be "ourself," but it looks so funny) away. . . .

Why do we keep on calling our—well, you know what we mean,—saying "we." We always *think* of "we" as "I" (not being Lindbergh, but the reverse). But if we said "wee-wee," we should be making a little pig of our—well, you know what we mean. . . .

Huh,—not much "overmatter" this week. "Overmatter" usually helps us quite a good deal. Here's the only "overmatter" we can find. What the deuce can be the overmatter,—we mean "where":

The John Day Company is bringing out the first novel that has come from the pen of *Norman Douglas* in almost ten years. It is called "In the Beginning." It is a story of the days before good and evil were born, when the gods walked with men. But this is far from being another of those Adam and Eve stories; here is an even more ancient scene. We can always recommend Norman Douglas. . . .

The Crime Club, Inc., is now in full swing. It selects for you the best mystery nove each month. One of its recent publications is "The Desert Moon Mystery" by *Kay Cleaver Strahan*, who writes about a Nevada ranch and yet tells a story as interesting as the best mysteries with English backgrounds. Which is a good deal for us to say. . . .

End of "overmatter." Ha! Here's an amusing anecdote from Bobbs-Merrill, just when we thought everything was a bunch of junk. You all know *Edward Garnett* (his name, by the way, being pronounced like the semi-precious stone),—beside being an English literary adviser of eminence, he is the father of the author of "Lady into Fox." Well, recently he read an article in the American *Bookman* and wrote to his (Garnett's) American publishers (they have just brought out his "Letters from *Joseph Conrad*") to the effect that Bobbs-Merrill certainly ought to freeze on to this young Indiana writer who had written about the Klan out there. "He should be on your list," quoth Garnett. "His name is, I think, Nicholson." He was right. But the full name was *Meredith Nicholson*. "And to think," said Meredith Nicholson sadly, "that after writing thirty books I should be discovered by the discoverer of Joseph Conrad!" . . . .

Lesley Frost, the daughter of the poet, *Robert Frost*, has become a member of the editorial staff of Doubleday, Doran and Company. Miss Frost owns and operates successfully two bookshops: The Open Book, Pittsfield, Mass., and The Book and Print Shop, Ann Arbor, Michigan. She will continue superintending these in addition to her editorial work. . . .

Goodbye, *Gustav Davidson!* We have seen something about you in the papers recently,—about your embarking for a residence of several years on Rimitara, an island of the Austral group. Oh Gustav, do not get the croup when down among the Austral group; we note you carry on your back the *Bible* and *World Almanac* and *Dictionary*, just these three,—with these alone you put to sea and sail for south of Tahiti. The Austral Isles, we understand, are virgin literary land which you desire to cultivate. For heaven's sake, don't sit up late, don't burn the candle at both ends, be careful how you choose your friends; don't dissipate, don't shilly-shally! So, *Ave*, Gustav, *atque Vale!* . . . .

During this month the original drawings made by *Rockwell Kent* for "Candide," with specimen pages colored by hand, will be displayed in the exhibition room of the Pynson Printers, Times Annex, 229 West 43rd Street. They are sure to be superb. . . .

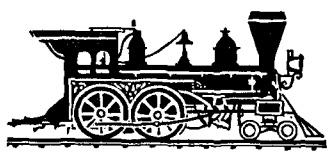
The Sixth annual Little Theatre Tournament begins on Monday, being held during the week of May 7th at the Frolic Theatre, 214 West 42nd Street. Three or four one-act plays will be produced each evening by as many different little theatre groups for five evenings, until all contesting presentations have been shown. Five judges will select the best four, each being awarded a prize of $200. The four chosen productions will be played again on Saturday afternoon and evening. . . .

The most popular novel of last fall, viz: "Dusty Answer," was dedicated to *George Rylands*, who is now a Don at King's College, Cambridge, and whose "Words and Poetry" has just been published by Payson & Clarke, Ltd. *George Humphrey Wolfestan Rylands* is a fair-haired six-footer and beginning to be known as a poet. The Hogarth Press brought out his first poem, called "Russet and Taffeta," which elicited enthusiastic comment from the English press. . . .

We have just learned a great deal,—namely that the name of the noted Polish novelist and dramatist, *Przybyszewski*, is pronounced Pra'-shee-ba-shef-ski. Our own name is pronounced without the umlaut. . . .

Louis Untermeyer, writing from London, says that he heartily endorses the young person's reading of modern poetry in the classroom, and feels that poets must be gratified by the interest the younger generation displays in their work; but when pupils write letters to poets as a part of their schoolwork or homework "gratification sours into annoyance." We took this matter up in this column once before. Mr. Untermeyer incloses a letter, one line of which runs, "Each student is required to write to some author whose works appeal to him." The correspondent finally comes down to a list of questions, one of which is "What is your favorite character in fiction," another, "Did you like to go to school?" We do not for an instant blame the correspondent; but we do very much blame such teachers in schools throughout the country as encourage their pupils to write such letters to authors. It is a villainous practice, merely wasting the authors' time. Where a youngster on his own initiative writes to some author for some particular reason, out of his own enthusiasm (or even the reverse) the matter is on quite a different footing. But the abhorrent questionnaire habit seems to be rooted deep in this country. We ourselves, humble as we are, have received whole pages of questions compiled by college professors. The young should certainly not get the idea that this is a clever thing to do. It is a dull way of wasting time. Enough is available in printed form concerning all prominent writers to document any school essay, and the young person will profit much more by having to go and dig up the material for himself than by being enjoined to annoy busy literary people with lists of questions. It isn't the children's fault. Ten to one they hate to do it. . . .

THE PHŒNICIAN.



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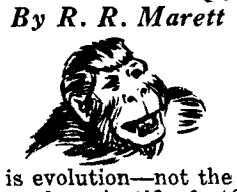

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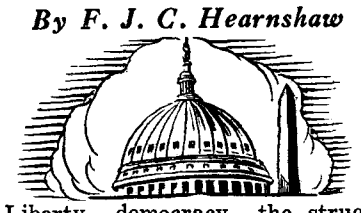

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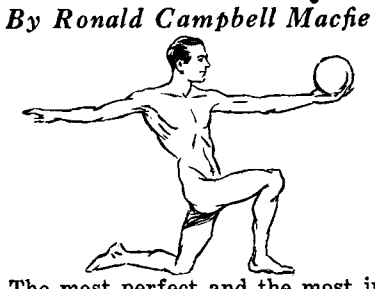

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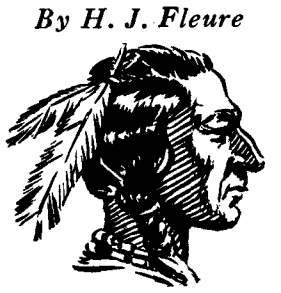

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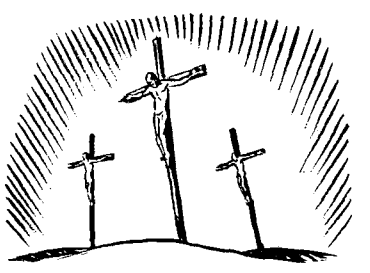

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